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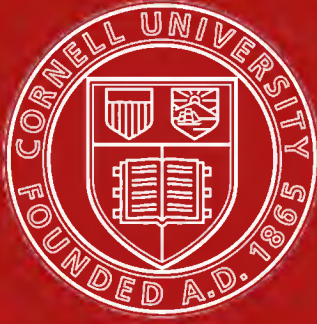
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The University Press Shakespeare



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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
IN FORTY VOLUMES

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*Editor's Autograph Edition*

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FOR SALE IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND  
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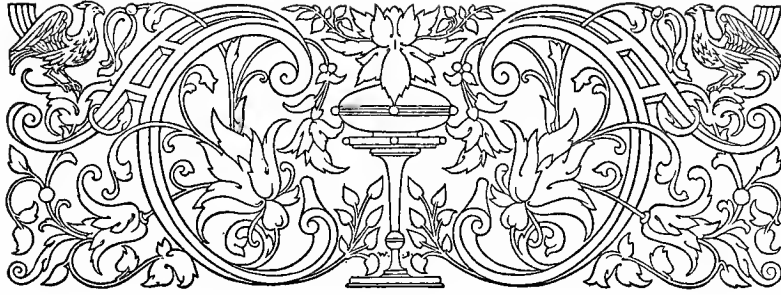












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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME V

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ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW LANG  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY DUDLEY HARDY



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NEW YORK    GEORGE D. SPROUL    MCMVII

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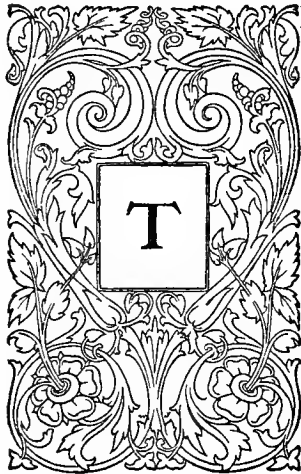
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## INTRODUCTION



THE comedy of "All's Well that Ends Well" is, perhaps, rather instructive than apt to provoke enthusiasm. Tennyson said that the composition of Shakespeare's plays, their genesis in the poet's mind, was a problem which entirely baffled him. In "All's Well that Ends Well," little as we know from external sources of the history of the piece, the intellectual processes appear unveiled. A play was wanted for the stage, perhaps in the poet's years as "Johannes Factotum." He took an Italian tale, which really "did not set his genius," did not set the genius of any dramatist working in his age and under his conditions. He wrote a piece full of the rhymed couplets, the euphuisms, the sonneteering of his early essays. Later, at an un-

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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known date, I guess, a play was needed, and Shakespeare rapidly vamped up the comedy as we possess it, mainly in blank verse. Probably it was never very popular. We have no Quarto of "All's Well that Ends Well." The drama first appears in the Folio, and it is clear that the printers set up the piece from a very bad text. But I do not suppose that such a distasteful passage as Helena's wit-combat with Parolles about virginity is mere "gag," an interpolation by the actors. Those who think so love Shakespeare, unlike Ben Jonson, on the other side of idolatry. George III was quite right, Shakespeare was very capable of having such things happen to him. In "All's Well that Ends Well" we have the work of the practical play-writer of the company, and the *charpentage* of the playwright is better than in "Cymbeline," for example.

The true poet — like cheerfulness on the philosophical reflections of Dr. Johnson's early friend, — "keeps breaking in," and the humourist makes gallant play with a character not present in the original story from Boccaccio, with that stock personage of the comedy, the Miles Gloriosus. Parolles is like Gullio in "The Return from Parnassus"; but a pretence of valour, not of taste and learning, is the motive of Parolles, "the vile Parolles," Mr. Israel Gollancz calls him. For me, no Parolles, no "All's Well that Ends Well!" The rascal "has given me medicines to make me love him." Shakespeare's rogues are dear to the readers as to the kind, smiling poet. But the poet is hampered by the intractable nature of his material. He seized on a story

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that would not be handled. The date of the piece, whether in the hypothetical early form, or in its actual shape, is unknown. Meres, in his "Palladis Tamia" (1598) mentions Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Won," otherwise unnoted. "Love's Labour's Lost" is certainly an early play, answering in Shakespeare's work to "Les Précieuses Ridicules," in that of Molière. The quarto of "Love's Labour's Lost" is of 1598, but was then "newly corrected and augmented." It must have been an early success, rewritten in 1598. It was natural that Shakespeare should follow it up with a comedy which, in 1598, still bore the title of "Love's Labour's Won." The name is appropriate to the dingy triumph which crowns the long and complicated labour of the love of Helena. Later, Shakespeare, in his second manner, may well have "newly corrected and augmented" "Love's Labour's Won," and produced it on the stage as "All's Well that Ends Well."

The story of the piece reached Shakespeare through Painter's translation in "The Palace of Pleasure" (1566) of a novel from the Decameron. "Giletta, a physician's daughter of Narbon, healed the French king of a Fistula, for reward whereof she demanded Beltramo, Count of Rossiglione, to husband. The Count, being married against his will, for despite fled to Florence and loved another; Giletta his wife by policy found means to be with her husband in place of his lover, and was begotten with child of two sons: which known to her husband, he received her again, and afterwards he lived in great honour and felicity."

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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Too clearly "this will never do." Human nature, pitiful of her who "never told her love," revolts from the girl who does tell it, unasked, who, *tout entière a sa proie attachée*, seizes her advantage, and makes the King confer on her the hand of his reluctant ward: the King, by feudal privilege, having his ward's marriage. Bertram is but a boy: he is too young to go to the wars, which boys sought so early in the Middle Ages. "'Too young,' and 'the next year,' and 'it is too early.'" Helena, in the play, not in Boccaccio, is clearly older and more mature than the lad who is beguiled into thinking Parolles a hero. If the King had thus thrust a man on a reluctant girl ward, all the world would cry shame. And if the man, by Helena's trick, obtained "restitution of conjugal rights," we should deem worse of him than of d'Artagnan when he so shamefully deceives Milady. The act is not seemly in Mariana, in Helena it is shameful. Again, Shakespeare, who otherwise follows Boccaccio very closely, makes Bertram a cur and a liar, in his repudiation of Diana as a public light o' love, a leaguer lass. In the "Decameron," the sight of his two sons, the ring, and his vow, reconcile the Count to his wife: the infamy of Bertram, worse than the mere knavery of Parolles, is wilfully thrown in by the poet. Halliwell Phillipps says that it is "dangerous" to speak with common-sense about the art of Shakespeare. It is not a danger dire enough to terrify *constantem virum*. Shakespeare, probably in a hurry, chose an impossibly unsympathetic plot, and darkened what was already repulsive to all who respect womankind and mankind.



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How was the situation to be redeemed, how was Shakespeare to win our sympathy for Helena? Sympathy then was, perhaps it is no longer, with patient Grizel. A woman must endure everything; and even now hearts are touched when Helena exclaims, as if the words were wrung from her,

“Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.”

Helena, her quality of *crampon* apart, is to the peevish false boy whom she adores as Titania to Bottom. Her soliloquy of love is worthy of the poet. Bertram is leaving her, her dear father has been spoken of, she weeps as the women of Achilles wept when Patroclus fell, “in seeming for Patroclus, but each for her own sorrows.” It is for Bertram that she “lets these tears down fall.”

*Hel.* O, were that all! I think not on my father;  
And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?  
I have forgot him: my imagination  
Carries no favour in 't but Bertram's.  
I am undone: there is no living, none,  
If Bertram be away. 'T were all one  
That I should love a bright particular star  
And think to wed it, he is so above me:  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.  
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself:  
The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. 'T was pretty, though a plague,  
To see him every hour; to sit and draw  
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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In our heart's table ; heart too capable  
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour :  
But now he 's gone, and my idolatrous fancy  
Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here ?

“The hind that would be mated with the lion,  
Must die for love.”

“Men have died, and the worms have eaten them, but not for love.” In any event it were better to die than to win, as Helena wins, a triumph worse than death. Having gained our hearts so far for Helena, Shakespeare very adroitly makes her a woman's woman, dear to her own sex, as perhaps Rosalind and Beatrix were not so dear. To this end he creates Bertram's admirable mother, the advocate of Helena as against her own son. How gracious must be the low-born maiden with “friends poor but honest” whom a feudal countess desires for the bride of her boy ! This Countess has loved in her day, and is *veterum haud immemor amorum*. Helena's virtues in like sort conquer the Florentine widow. Her sex adores her : Helena must be good, — and not too vivaciously bewitching, perhaps. Mrs. Jameson, the critic, owns herself overcome. Let us quote Mrs. Jameson : “There never was, perhaps, a more beautiful picture of a woman's love, cherished in secret, not self-consuming in silent languishment, — not pining in thought, — not passive and ‘desponding over its idol,’ — but patient and hopeful, strong in its own intensity, and sustained by its own fond faith. The passion here reposes upon itself for all its interest ; it derives nothing from art or ornament or circumstance ; it

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has nothing of the picturesque charm or glowing romance of Juliet ; nothing of the poetical splendour of Portia, or the vestal grandeur of Isabel. The situation of Helena is the most painful and degrading in which a woman can be placed. She is poor and lowly ; she loves a man who is far her superior in rank, who repays her love with indifference, and rejects her hand with scorn. She marries him against his will ; he leaves her with contumely on the day of their marriage, and makes his return to her arms depend on conditions apparently impossible. All the circumstances and details with which Helena is surrounded are shocking to our feelings and wounding to our delicacy, and yet the beauty of the character is made to triumph over all ; and Shakespeare, resting for effect on its internal resources and its genuine truth and sweetness, has not even availed himself of some extraneous advantages with which Helena is represented in the original story." Hazlitt, a male critic, sings to the same tune. "The character of Helena is one of great sweetness and delicacy. She is placed" (that is, she goes and places herself) "in circumstances of the most critical kind, and has to court her husband both as a maiden and a wife ; yet the most scrupulous delicacy of female modesty is not once violated" by this female d'Artagnan ! And for what does Helena violate, as she does, every conceivable scruple of male as well as of female delicacy ? For a pretty, plucky, wanton boy, whose courage and good looks cannot atone for his abject falseness, for his dragged honour. Dr. Johnson speaks out like a man. "I cannot reconcile myself to him — a man noble without

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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generosity, and young without truth, who marries Helena as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate ; when she is dead by his unkindness sneaks home to another marriage ; is accused by a woman he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness."

In part the Doctor is wrong. The King could have married Bertram to the ugliest widow in his realm. Again, nothing in Bertram's life "became him like the leaving" Helena. It was his duty not to live in the loveless wedlock thrust upon him : though not to repel the enforced bride with lack of courtesy. For the rest, regardless of Hazlitt and Mrs. Jameson, my heart is with Dr. Johnson. Shakespeare makes Helena — her passion apart — delightful. She has tenderness, wisdom, gentleness, and even humour. Unlike Mr. Israel Gollancz, she appreciates Parolles. She holds with him a wit-combat, that is not very witty, or of a "scrupulous female delicacy." She has a just estimate of Parolles, who easily imposes on Bertram's stupid boyhood.

" I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;  
Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him  
That they take place when virtue's steely bones  
Look bleak i' the cold wind."

Shakespeare, then, to make Helena sympathetic, has robed her in all the virtues and graces. Her tact, the affair of Bertram apart, is faultless ; her wisdom, goodness, delicacy, and humorous appreciation (the affair of Bertram apart) are exquisite. Unluckily the more of genius the poet lavishes on his heroine, the more incredi-

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ble does she become. This is not the woman to lose her heart to a pretty boy of fifteen, too young to go to the wars even in the age of the Renaissance. Younger than he have gallant soldiers made, in many a war. Helena, even if her mature wisdom could permit her to be tangled in Bertram's hair and fettered by his eye, for a while, would have plucked the passion out of her heart. On the contrary she gains "the hound" (thus freely speaks Herr George Brandes concerning Bertram) by means and tricks intolerable.

Herr Brandes has an explanation of Shakespeare's error, which perhaps he does not carry to its logical conclusion. The poet wrote "Love's Labour's Won" in youth, and in the light tone and rhyming method of which traces remain. In later years he found the world out of joint, became pessimistic, and unpacked his bosom in "Hamlet." But, his company being far from prosperous, bright little modern pieces had to be produced. "The thing had to be done." So Shakespeare, still as one in doleful dumps, took up his old bright little piece, "Love's Labour's Won," and tried to make a comedy out of that. "But now it did not turn out a comedy; the time was past when Shakespeare's chief strength lay in his humour." Herr Brandes is inconsistent. He admits that the banter about virginity, between Parolles and Helena, is part of the original early "Love's Labour's Won." Certainly Shakespeare's strength did not always lie in his humour, in the early days when he created *that* scene. Again, Parolles, in "All's Well that Ends Well," is regarded, as "in all probability, touched up and endowed

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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with new wit during the revision." Therefore Shakespeare had more wit to spend after writing "Hamlet" than in the early days when "his strength lay in his humour." Herr Brandes cannot have it both ways, one way in his first, the other way in his second volume. If Shakespeare lost his humour, it is impossible that Parolles should be "the first faint outline of the figure which, seven or eight years later, became the immortal Falstaff," for, in these years, Shakespeare was growing in humour as Falstaff was putting on flesh. Nor could Shakespeare's humour have been fading, if he later improved, after writing "Hamlet," in "All's Well that Ends Well," on the first draft of Parolles in "Love's Labour's Won."

We cannot disengage Shakespeare's emotional development from his plays. Of course we might argue the matter out on these lines. The bilious, morbid post-Hamletian Shakespeare says:—

"They want a comedy do they? I'll give them a comedy! Naught is everything, and everything is naught. That is the humour of it; that is the humour of everything in this lazar house of a life, in all this empty imposture of a world! Ho, boy, a flagon of that poor creature, small beer! I'll take up that empty little babyish 'Love's Labour's Won' of my salad days. I shall make Helena a perfect woman, nobly planned to warn, to comfort, and command, and I shall show how her whole moral nature is upset,—as in this pitiful life it would certainly be,—by the eyes and curls of a pretty, profligate, false, mannerless wretch of a boy. She shall sink deeper than ever plummet sounds, she shall marry

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him against his will, and win him by a trick that would sicken Nym and Pistol. I must make him a perfect hound, of course, a mean, malignant liar. I must drag the excellent Florentine widow, and the maidenly Diana through the mud, — what is life but mud? Ho, drawer, another firkin of your poor creature: I thirst! Then I must leave the peerless Helena in the arms of her moral poltroon, and add the cynical title, ‘All’s Well that Ends Well.’ ‘Well,’ ha, ha! Nothing is well, William feels far from well!” [Drinks.]

Accepting this little soliloquy, we can understand how the melancholy William, after the Dark Lady showed in her true colours, and Essex came to grief, and things in general went wrong, and there was something rotten in the state of England, wrote “All’s Well that Ends Well,” when, in fact, everything ended horribly ill, and the married Bertram gave Helena cause for anxiety, and probably took to drink, and beat her. These things were in Bertram’s character. But we do not accept the soliloquy, or the idea that the piece is a pessimistic satire on human existence. Shakespeare had to turn out a comedy, in the way of business. He was lazy, and took up and revamped an old piece of his youth, a piece in which he was trysted with a perfectly impossible plot. He poured forth his genius on Helena; he created the old Countess (the best of women), he left the Clown as witless as he had always been; he left great boulders of his early rhymed scenes in the midst of his blank verse; all this just because Shakespeare was hurried, lazy, and did not care. He was a very human being, and never took him-

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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self with the portentous and admirable seriousness of the third-rate modern novelist. At least it is thus that I try to understand the man, not as the bitter mocker who wrote "All's Well that Ends Well" to be a satire on human excellence. We may look at it in that light, but nobody did so in the age either of Shakespeare or of Boccaccio. "Did she get him?" was all that Mr. Barrie's old Thrums lady asked to be told in a novel. Helena "got him," and all's well that ends well. The groundlings asked no more, but probably the play was never more popular than it deserved to be. Mr. Pepys saw "All's Lost by Lust," but he does not mention any performance of "All's Well that Ends Well."

As a comedy, the piece is saved by "the vile Parolles." Herr Brandes thinks that Parolles was invented and introduced to afford some excuse for the iniquity of Bertram, a boy deceived and trained by such a Mentor.

Though the Countess hints at this as an excuse for her son, more probably the stock figure of the braggart mercenary, who has haunted every camp, and speaks every tongue of Central and Southern Europe, was brought in merely for "comic relief," which the dull clown (no doubt very like a clown in real life), does not supply. We have many notable studies of cowardice. The poltroonery of Falstaff is but part of his humour: no doubt he had been a tall man of his hands. Eachan, in "The Fair Maid of Perth," is a coward because he has "drunk the milk of the white doe," and so drawn the curse into his blood. He knows and hates his own weakness; his temper is high, but his character does not back him; he is a tragic



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coward, not a comic poltroon, and wins pity not laughter. A recent hero of modern romance in Mr. Mason's "The Four Feathers," is only a coward in conceit, afraid of being afraid ; but, unlike Eachan, he conquers himself. Parolles, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, is a comic coward ; his imagination is all warlike and chivalresque ; life is a burden under the dishonour of the lost drum : he dreams of military distinction as a child does, but has no more heart than a hare, and knows it. The cowardice sits well on Parolles, because he is all false together, whereas cowardice is tragical when it is the ineradicable fundamental sin of a nature otherwise noble. For evidence to character Parolles appeals to Captain Spurio of the regiment of the Spinii, "with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his sinister cheek : it was this very sword entrenched it ; say to him : I live, and observe his reports for me." They had "begun to smoke" Parolles, before he had the happy idea of pretending to recover that regimental palladium, the lost drum. Perhaps he might beg, borrow, or steal a drum, "this or another." The marvel is that "he should know what he is, yet be what he is." But what would you have ? Renown in war is the ideal of Parolles, it is creditable to him that he has an ideal : and he has the strongest sense of humour. He remotely resembles the delightful Chevalier Burke, in Mr. Stevenson's "Master of Ballantrae." He can laugh himself out of most quandaries. Listeners to him, when he supposes himself in the hands of a barbaric enemy, hear no more good of themselves than the Duke heard from Lucio, or Poin from Falstaff. Parolles would ever

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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be and move "under the influence of the most received star," the most fashionable of the hosts of heaven ; but, alas, he "was created for men to breathe themselves on," like the wooden soldan on whom poor Oliver Proudfoot, that honest Parolles of Perth, exercised his weapon. "Tongue, I must put you in a butter-woman's mouth, and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils." Why Bajazet's mule? Probably the animal was admired for its reticence. Mr. Israel Gollancz suggests that perhaps 'Bajazet's' is a blunder on the part of Parolles for 'Balaam's.'" But Balaam has no mule, an ass was Balaam's steed, and that ass "*parle, et même il parle bien.*" It was a still tongue that Parolles needed to borrow. Parolles gets off easily: no poetic justice ever falls on Shakespeare's poor merry rogues. He is to his characters a forgiving creator: he made them so, and will not damn them for no fault of theirs. He would have shewn mercy to Mr. Squeers and Mr. Pecksniff.

"By foolery thrive,  
There 's place and means for every man alive,"

says the detected but optimistic Parolles. "If my heart were great, 't would burst at this." Happily the heart of Parolles is not great, and he has a smiling future as a buffoon, like the clown, "a shrewd knave and an unhappy." Motley is Parolles's only safe and profitable wear, "a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched." The tolerant Shakespeare forgives Bertram too, in the high tide of his false meanness, when Lafeu rejects him with, "Your reputation comes too short for my daugh-

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ter ; you are no husband for her." But Bertram is good enough for the peerless Helena. So we end with [*Flourish*] "she has got him," —

"I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly."

Shakespeare's hack-work is finished, as heaven would have it, and we may believe that, the needs of the company satisfied, he never thought of his play again.

ANDREW LANG.



**ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ <sup>1</sup>

KING OF FRANCE.

DUKE OF FLORENCE.

BERTRAM, Count of Rousillon.

LAFEU, an old lord.

PAROLLES, a follower of Bertram.

Steward,

LAVACHE, a Clown, } servants to the Countess of Rousillon.

A Page.

COUNTRESS OF ROUSILLON, mother to Bertram.

HELENA, a gentlewoman protected by the Countess.

An old Widow of Florence.

DIANA, daughter to the Widow.

VIOLENTA, } neighbours and friends to the Widow.

MARIANA, }

Lords, Officers, Soldiers, &c., French and Florentine.

SCENE — *Rousillon ; Paris ; Florence ; Marseilles*

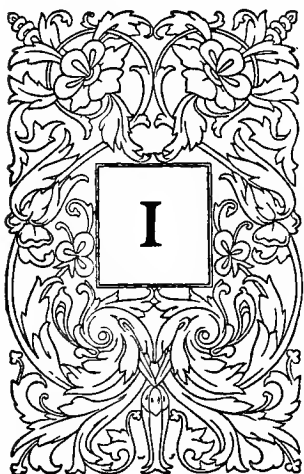
<sup>1</sup> DRAMATIS PERSONÆ] “All’s Well” was printed for the first time in the Folio of 1623. There the text is divided into acts, but not into scenes, although the play opens with the words Actus Primus, Scæna Prima. Rowe first supplied scenic divisions, as well as a list of “dramatis personæ,” in his edition of 1709.



ACT FIRST—SCENE I—ROUSILLON  
THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS OF ROUSILLON, HELENA, and LAFEU,  
all in black*

COUNTESS



IN DELIVERING MY SON  
from me, I bury a second husband.

BER. And I in going, madam,  
weep o'er my father's death anew:  
but I must attend his majesty's  
command, to whom I am now in  
ward, evermore in subjection.

LAF. You shall find of the king  
a husband, madam; you, sir, a  
father: he that so generally is  
at all times good, must of ne-  
cessity hold his virtue to you;  
whose worthiness would stir it  
up where it wanted, rather than lack it where there is  
such abundance.

10

5-6 *in ward*] In feudal and Elizabethan England heirs of great fortunes  
were invariably made wards of the king; he acted as their guardian.

7-10 *he that so generally . . . abundance*] he that is so invariably kind

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

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COUNT. What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?

LAF. He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

COUNT. This young gentlewoman had a father, — O, that "had"! how sad a passage 't is! — whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the king's sake, <sup>20</sup> he were living! I think it would be the death of the king's disease.

LAF. How called you the man you speak of, madam?

COUNT. He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so, — Gerard de Narbon.

LAF. He was excellent indeed, madam: the king very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

BER. What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of?

LAF. A fistula, my lord. 30

BER. I heard not of it before.

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must needs extend his (virtue of) kindness towards you, whose worth would be more likely to excite kindly feelings in those who are without them than to alienate them in one who is so richly endowed with them.

13 *persecuted time with hope*] The general meaning is: Hope of recovery, fostered by his physicians, has hampered the action of (time in developing) the disease. But the only real effect (since the disease is not arrested) is to lose hope, as time goes on.



SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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LAF. I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

COUNT. His sole child, my lord; and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises; her disposition she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity; they are virtues and traitors too: in her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty and achieves her goodness.

40

LAF. Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

COUNT. 'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena, go to, no more; lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to have —

HEL. I do affect a sorrow, indeed, but I have it too.

LAF. Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead; excessive grief the enemy to the living.

37 *virtuous qualities*] qualities of good breeding, grace, erudition, the fruits of education: not here qualities of moral virtue.

38 *go with pity*] are to be regretted, are to be deprecated: *virtues and traitors*; excellences which mislead as to the true character of their possessors. Cf. Bassanio's observation, *Merch. of Ven.*, I, iii, 180: "I like not fair terms and a villain's mind."

39 *simpleness*] singleness, integrity, freedom from deceit or uncleanness.

46 *livelihood*] life, liveliness. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 26: "pith and livelihood" — the attributes of Adonis's sweating palm.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

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COUNT. If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess 50  
makes it soon mortal.

BER. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

LAF. How understand we that ?

COUNT. Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy  
father

In manners, as in shape ! thy blood and virtue  
Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness  
Share with thy birthright ! Love all, trust a few,  
Do wrong to none : be able for thine enemy  
Rather in power than use ; and keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key : be check'd for silence, 60  
But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,  
That thee may furnish, and my prayers pluck down,  
Fall on thy head ! Farewell, my lord ;  
'Tis an unseason'd courtier ; good my lord,  
Advise him.

LAF. He cannot want the best  
That shall attend his love.

COUNT. Heaven bless him ! Farewell, Bertram. [*Exit.*]

BER. [*To Helena*] The best wishes that can be forged  
in your thoughts be servants to you ! Be comfortable  
to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her. 70

LAF. Farewell, pretty lady : you must hold the credit  
of your father. ~ [*Exeunt Bertram and Lafeu.*]

---

50-51 *excess . . . mortal*] excessive indulgence in grief puts an end  
to it. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, iii, 52 :

“no sorrow  
But killed itself much sooner.”  
and *Rich. II*, II, i, 33 *seq.* : “Violent fires soon burn out themselves.”

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

HEL. O, were that all! I think not on my father;  
And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?  
I have forgot him: my imagination  
Carries no favour in 't but Bertram's.  
I am undone: there is no living, none,  
If Bertram be away. 'T were all one  
That I should love a bright particular star 80  
And think to wed it, he is so above me:  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.  
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself:  
The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. 'T was pretty, though a plague,  
To see him every hour; to sit and draw  
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,  
In our heart's table; heart too capable 90  
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour:  
But now he 's gone, and my idolatrous fancy  
Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here?

*Enter PAROLLES*

[*Aside*] One that goes with him: I love him for his sake;  
And yet I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward;  
Yet these fix'd evils sit so fit in him,  
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones

---

74-75 *grace his remembrance . . . shed for him*] are mere ornamental  
tributes to his memory rather than outpourings of past affection.  
97 *take place*] hold their own.

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

---

Look bleak i' the cold wind: withal, full oft we  
see

Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

PAR. Save you, fair queen!

100

HEL. And you, monarch!

PAR. No.

HEL. And no.

PAR. Are you meditating on virginity?

HEL. Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you:  
let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity;  
how may we barricado it against him?

PAR. Keep him out.

HEL. But he assails; and our virginity, though  
valiant, in the defence yet is weak: unfold to us some  
warlike resistance.

111

PAR. There is none: man, sitting down before you,  
will undermine you and blow you up.

HEL. Bless our poor virginity from underminers and  
blowers up! Is there no military policy, how virgins  
might blow up men?

PAR. Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier  
be blown up: marry, in blowing him down again, with  
the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is  
not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve  
virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase, and  
there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost.  
That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Vir-  
ginity by being once lost may be ten times found; by

99 *Cold wisdom . . . folly*] cheerless wisdom holding a place of in-  
feriority to folly, which has no call to exist.

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

being ever kept, it is ever lost: 't is too cold a companion; away with 't!

HEL. I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin. 127

PAR. There's little can be said in 't; 't is against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity, is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin: virginity murders itself; and should be buried in highways out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by 't: out with 't! within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase; and the principle itself not much the worse: away with 't! 140

HEL. How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

PAR. Let me see: marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'T is a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth: off with 't while 't is vendible; answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion; richly suited, but unsuitable: just like the brooch and the

139 *ten*] The First Folio reads *two*. *Ten*, which is Hanmer's emendation, is obviously correct. Cf. *Sonnet vi*, 9-10 (which treats of the same topic):

“*Ten* times thyself were happier than thou art,  
If ten of thine *ten* times refigured thee.”

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

tooth-pick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek: and your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears, it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 't is a withered pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet 't is a withered pear: will you any thing with it?

HEL. Not my virginity yet. . . . . 153

There shall your master have a thousand loves,  
 A mother and a mistress and a friend,  
 A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,  
 A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,  
 A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;  
 His humble ambition, proud humility,  
 His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet, 160  
 His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world  
 Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms,  
 That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he —  
 I know not what he shall. God send him well!  
 The court's a learning place, and he is one —

PAR. What one, i' faith?

HEL. That I wish well. 'T is pity —

PAR. What's pity?

HEL. That wishing well had not a body in 't,  
 Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born, 170

147 *near not now*] are now out of fashion.

*date*] a pun on the word in its two senses of "fruit" and "time of life." Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, I, ii, 249: "And then to be baked with no *date* in the pie, for then the man's *date* is out."

162–163 *adoptious . . . gossips*] assumed Christian names, for which purblind Love is sponsor.

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,  
Might with effects of them follow our friends,  
And show what we alone must think, which never  
Returns us thanks.

*Enter PAGE*

PAGE. Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you.

*[Exit.]*

PAR. Little Helen, farewell: if I can remember thee,  
I will think of thee at court.

HEL. Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a  
charitable star.

PAR. Under Mars, I.

180

HEL. I especially think, under Mars.

PAR. Why under Mars?

HEL. The wars have so kept you under, that you  
must needs be born under Mars.

PAR. When he was predominant.

HEL. When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

PAR. Why think you so?

HEL. You go so much backward when you fight.

PAR. That's for advantage.

189

HEL. So is running away, when fear proposes the  
safety: but the composition that your valour and fear  
makes in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the  
wear well.

PAR. I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee

---

191-192 *composition . . . wing*] valour, which causes you to run (back-  
ward, as you say, to get up impetus), and fear, which also impels  
you to run (away), make up your being, of which the power of  
flight is consequently the main characteristic.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel, and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends: get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee: so, farewell. [Exit. 201

HEL. Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,  
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky  
Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull  
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.  
What power is it which mounts my love so high;  
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?  
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings  
To join like likes and kiss like native things.  
Impossible be strange attempts to those 210  
That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose  
What hath been cannot be: who ever strove  
To show her merit, that did miss her love?  
The king's disease — my project may deceive me,  
But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me. [Exit.

208–212 *The mightiest space . . . cannot be*] The widest difference of fortune is bridged by nature, which brings together like objects, however far apart they may happen to be, and makes things of inherent similitude kiss or unite, whatever distance separates them. Impossible are unusual attempts to those who judge their efforts by normal experience and suppose that an exceptional occurrence can never recur. Hanmer's generally accepted change of *What hath been* (l. 212) into *What hath not been* scarcely improves the sense and injures the metre.



SCENE II ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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SCENE II — PARIS

*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING OF FRANCE with letters, and  
divers Attendants*

KING. The Florentines and Senoys are by the ears ;  
Have fought with equal fortune, and continue  
A braving war.

FIRST LORD. So 't is reported, sir.

KING. Nay, 't is most credible ; we here receive it  
A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,  
With caution, that the Florentine will move us  
For speedy aid ; wherein our dearest friend  
Prejudicates the business, and would seem  
To have us make denial.

FIRST LORD. His love and wisdom,  
Approved so to your majesty, may plead  
For amplest credence.

10

KING. He hath arm'd our answer,  
And Florence is denied before he comes :  
Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see  
The Tuscan service, freely have they leave  
To stand on either part.

SEC. LORD. It well may serve

---

1 *Senoy*s] This is Painter's rendering in *The Palace of Pleasure* of  
Boccaccio's "Sanesi," *i. e.* the people of Sienna.

11 *arm'd*] made ready, or confirmed.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

---

A nursery to our gentry, who are sick  
For breathing and exploit.

KING. What's he comes here?

*Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES*

FIRST LORD. It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,  
Young Bertram.

KING. Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face ;  
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste, 20  
Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts  
Mayst thou inherit too ! Welcome to Paris.

BER. My thanks and duty are your majesty's.

KING. I would I had that corporal soundness now,  
As when thy father and myself in friendship  
First tried our soldiership ! He did look far  
Into the service of the time, and was  
Discipled of the bravest : he lasted long ;  
But on us both did haggish age steal on,  
And wore us out of act. It much repairs me 30  
To talk of your good father. In his youth  
He had the wit, which I can well observe  
To-day in our young lords ; but they may jest  
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted

---

33-38 *they may jest . . . awaked them*] they may go on jesting till they wear all point out of their gibes before they can cover their petty follies with meritorious achievement. He was so courtierlike, so urbane, that there was nothing of contempt in his dignified bearing nor aught of bitterness in his keenness of wit. If bitterness or scorn ever appeared, it was a man of his own rank who evoked them.

SCENE II ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Ere they can hide their levity in honour :  
So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness  
Were in his pride or sharpness ; if they were,  
His equal had awaked them ; and his honour,  
Clock to itself, knew the true minute when  
Exception bid him speak, and at this time 40  
His tongue obey'd his hand : who were below him  
He used as creatures of another place ;  
And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,  
Making them proud of his humility,  
In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man  
Might be a copy to these younger times ;  
Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now  
But goers backward.

BER. His good remembrance, sir,  
Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb ;  
So in approof lives not his epitaph 50  
As in your royal speech.

KING. Would I were with him ! He would always  
say —  
Methinks I hear him now ; his plausible words

---

40 *Exception*] Blame, disapproval, the duty to take exception. Cf.  
*Hamlet*, V, ii, 223 :

“ What I have done,  
That might your nature, honour and *exception*  
Roughly awake.”

42 *creatures of another place*] of another and of superior rank to that  
which they really occupied.

45 *In their poor praise he*] At their simple praises of him he showed  
signs of modesty or humility.

50-51 *So in approof . . . royal speech*] His epitaph does not supply  
such confirmation of his merits as does the speech of the King.

He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,  
 To grow there and to bear, — “ Let me not live,” —  
 This his good melancholy oft began,  
 On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,  
 When it was out, — “ Let me not live,” quoth he,  
 “ After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff  
 Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses 60  
 All but new things disdain ; whose judgements are  
 Mere fathers of their garments ; whose constancies  
 Expire before their fashions.” This he wish'd :  
 I after him do after him wish too,  
 Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,  
 I quickly were dissolved from my hive,  
 To give some labourers room.

SEC. LORD. You are loved, sir ;  
 They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

KING. I fill a place, I know 't. How long is 't, count,  
 Since the physician at your father's died ? 70  
 He was much famed.

BER. Some six months since, my lord.

KING. If he were living, I would try him yet.  
 Lend me an arm ; the rest have worn me out  
 With several applications : nature and sickness  
 Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count ;  
 My son 's no dearer.

BER. Thank your majesty.

[*Exeunt. Flourish.*]

59-61 *the snuff . . . disdain*] used-up wick, useless cinders, in the sight  
 of younger spirits, whose alert minds disdain all but new things.

66 *dissolved*] separated, cut off, discharged. Cf. *M. Wives*, V, v, 211 :  
 “ Nothing can *dissolve* us.”

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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SCENE III—ROUSILLON

*THE COUNT'S PALACE*

*Enter* COUNTESS, Steward, and Clown

COUNT. I will now hear ; what say you of this gentlewoman ?

STEW. Madam, the care I have had to even your content, I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours ; for then we wound our modesty and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

COUNT. What does this knave here ? Get you gone, sirrah : the complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe : 't is my slowness that I do not ; for I know you<sup>10</sup> lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

CLO. 'T is not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNT. Well, sir.

CLO. No, madam, 't is not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damned : but, if I may have

---

<sup>3</sup> *to even your content*] to do precisely what you wish.

<sup>4</sup> *calendar*] record.

<sup>6-7</sup> *make foul . . . publish them*] obscure the grounds of our deserts.

Cf. for the general sentiment, *Troil. and Cress.*, I, iii, 241 :

“The worthiness of praise distains his worth,  
If that the praised himself bring the praise forth.”

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

---

your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNT. Wilt thou needs be a beggar? 20

CLO. I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNT. In what case?

CLO. In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage: and I think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o' my body; for they say barnes are blessings.

COUNT. Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

CLO. My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNT. Is this all your worship's reason? 30

CLO. Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

COUNT. May the world know them?

CLO. I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent.

COUNT. Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

CLO. I am out o' friends, madam; and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

COUNT. Such friends are thine enemies, knave. 40

CLO. You're shallow, madam, in great friends; for

---

18 *to go to the world*] to get married: a common phrase. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, i, 287: "Thus goes every one to the world but I." *As You Like It*, V, iii, 4: "A woman of the world" means "a married woman."  
23 *Service is no heritage*] A common proverb, with which the speaker associates a reminiscence of *Ps.* cxxvii, 3: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord."

SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

the knaves come to do that for me, which I am aweary of. He that ears my land spares my team, and gives me leave to in the crop ; if I be his cuckold, he 's my drudge : he that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood ; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood ; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend : ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage ; for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist, how-<sup>50</sup> some'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one ; they may joul horns together, like any deer i' the herd.

COUNT. Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave ?

CLO. A prophet I, madam ; and I speak the truth the next way :

For I the ballad will repeat,  
Which men full true shall find ;  
Your marriage comes by destiny,  
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

60

---

<sup>50</sup> *Charbon . . . Poysam*] It has been ingeniously conjectured that these names are formed from the French words " chair bonne " (*i. e.*, good flesh), and " poisson " (*i. e.*, fish), and that reference is made to the Lenten fare characteristic respectively of Puritan and Papist. There is an old French proverb, " Jeune chair et vieil poisson " (meaning that meat is best eaten when the animal is young, fish when old and fat), which may well have suggested the collocation of the words, with their epithets.

<sup>57</sup> *the ballad*] Cf. John Grange's *Golden Aphroditis*, 1577 :

" As cuckoldes come by destinie,  
So cuckowes sing by kind."





SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

at an earthquake, 't would mend the lottery well : a man may draw his heart out, ere a' pluck one.

COUNT. You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

CLO. That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done ! Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt ; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am going, forsooth : the business is for Helen to come hither. 90  
[*Exit.*]

COUNT. Well, now.

STEW. I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNT. Faith, I do : her father bequeathed her to me ; and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds : there is more owing her than is paid ; and more shall be paid her than she'll demand. 98

STEW. Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she wished me : alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own words to her own ears ; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son : Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates ; Love no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were

---

89-90 *wear the surplice . . . black gown*] conform outwardly to the law. The reference is to the antipathy of the Puritan to the surplice which the law enjoined, and his exclusive devotion to the black gown.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

---

level ; . . . queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surprised, without rescue in the first assault, or ransom afterward. This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in : which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you withal ; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it. 112

COUNT. You have discharged this honestly ; keep it to yourself : many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance, that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you, leave me : stall this in your bosom ; and I thank you for your honest care : I will speak with you further anon.

[*Exit Steward.*]

*Enter HELENA*

Even so it was with me when I was young :

If ever we are nature's, these are ours ; this thorn 120  
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong ;

Our blood to us, this to our blood is born ;

It is the show and seal of nature's truth,

Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth :

---

106 *queen of virgins*] The obvious lacuna in this line evoked Theobald's brilliant emendation, *Diana no queen of virgins*, which is commonly adopted. This reading, which should be compared with line 203 ("your Dian"), implies that "poor knight" (l. 107) is "a poor female votary." This interpretation is fully supported by the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, V, i, 140-144: "O sacred, shadowy, cold, and constant queen . . . who to thy female knights Allow'st no more blood," etc. Cf. *Much Ado*, V, iii, 13, where Hero is called "virgin knight."

SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

By our remembrances of days foregone,  
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.  
Her eye is sick on 't : I observe her now.

HEL. What is your pleasure, madam ?

COUNT. You know, Helen,  
I am a mother to you.

HEL. Mine honourable mistress.

COUNT. Nay, a mother : 130  
Why not a mother ? When I said " a mother,"  
Methought you saw a serpent : what 's in " mother,"  
That you start at it ? I say, I am your mother ;  
And put you in the catalogue of those  
That were enwombed mine : 't is often seen  
Adoption strives with nature ; and choice breeds  
A native slip to us from foreign seeds :  
You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,  
Yet I express to you a mother's care :  
God's mercy, maiden ! does it curd thy blood 140  
To say I am thy mother ? What 's the matter,  
That this distemper'd messenger of wet,  
The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye ?  
Why ? that you are my daughter ?

HEL. That I am not.

COUNT. I say, I am your mother.

HEL. Pardon, madam ;  
The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother :  
I am from humble, he from honour'd name ;

---

142-143] Cf. *Lucrece*, 1586, 1587:

" And round about her tear-distained eye  
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky."

No note upon my parents, his all noble :  
 My master, my dear lord he is ; and I  
 His servant live, and will his vassal die : 150  
 He must not be my brother.

COUNT. Nor I your mother ?

HEL. You are my mother, madam ; would you  
 were, —

So that my lord your son were not my brother, —  
 Indeed my mother ! or were you both our mothers,  
 I care no more for than I do for heaven,  
 So I were not his sister. Can't no other,  
 But I your daughter, he must be my brother ?

COUNT. Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-  
 law :

God shield you mean it not ! daughter and mother  
 So strive upon your pulse. What, pale again ? 160  
 My fear hath catch'd your fondness : now I see  
 The mystery of your loneliness, and find  
 Your salt tears' head : now to all sense 't is gross  
 You love my son ; invention is ashamed,  
 Against the proclamation of thy passion,  
 To say thou dost not : therefore tell me true ;  
 But tell me then, 't is so ; for, look, thy cheeks  
 Confess it, th' one to th' other ; and thine eyes  
 See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours,

160 *So strive . . . pulse*] So strain, excite your feeling.

162 *loneliness*] Theobald's admirable emendation for the old reading  
*loveliness*.

164-165 *invention . . . passion*] Falsehood would be ashamed to deny  
 the fact in face of the plain avowal you made of your passion.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

That in their kind they speak it : only sin 170  
 And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,  
 That truth should be suspected. Speak, is 't so ?  
 If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew ;  
 If it be not, forswear 't : howe'er, I charge thee,  
 As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,  
 To tell me truly.

HEL. Good madam, pardon me !

COUNT. Do you love my son ?

HEL. Your pardon, noble mistress !

COUNT. Love you my son ?

HEL. Do not you love him, madam ?

COUNT. Go not about ; my love hath in 't a bond,  
 Whereof the world takes note : come, come, disclose 180  
 The state of your affection ; for your passions  
 Have to the full appeach'd.

HEL. Then, I confess,  
 Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,  
 That before you, and next unto high heaven,  
 I love your son.

My friends were poor, but honest ; so's my love :  
 Be not offended ; for it hurts not him  
 That he is loved of me : I follow him not  
 By any token of presumptuous suit ;  
 Nor would I have him till I do deserve him ; 190  
 Yet never know how that desert should be.  
 I know I love in vain, strive against hope ;

182 *Have . . . appeach'd*] Have given accusatory evidence, have  
 "peached," in the slang sense.

Yet, in this captious and intenible sieve,  
 I still pour in the waters of my love,  
 And lack not to lose still : thus, Indian-like,  
 Religious in mine error, I adore  
 The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,  
 But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,  
 Let not your hate encounter with my love  
 For loving where you do : but if yourself,  
 Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,  
 Did ever in so true a flame of liking  
 Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian  
 Was both herself and love ; O, then, give pity  
 To her, whose state is such, that cannot choose  
 But lend and give where she is sure to lose ;  
 That seeks not to find that her search implies,  
 But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies !

200

COUNT. Had you not lately an intent, — speak truly, —  
 To go to Paris ?

193 *captious and intenible sieve*] Both words, in the senses which are required by the context, are not met with elsewhere. "Captious" seems equivalent to "capacious," capable of receiving large quantities; "intenible" is its antithesis, "incapable of retaining."

197-198 *The sun . . . more*] For other references by Shakespeare to sun-worship cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, i, 116, 117, *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 220, *seq.*, and *Sonnet* vii, 1-4.

201 *Whose aged honour*] Whose honourable conduct in age proves that you were virtuous in youth.

203-204 *your Dian . . . love*] The general meaning is, "The flame of liking" burned so purely in you that the goddess of Chastity (Dian), whom you worshipped, suffered no menace from your passion ; in your case Love and Chastity were at one.

SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

HEL. Madam, I had.

COUNT. Wherefore ? tell true. 210

HEL. I will tell truth ; by grace itself I swear.  
You know my father left me some prescriptions  
Of rare and proved effects, such as his reading  
And manifest experience had collected  
For general sovereignty ; and that he will'd me  
In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,  
As notes, whose faculties inclusive were,  
More than they were in note : amongst the rest,  
There is a remedy, approved, set down,  
To cure the desperate languishings whereof 220  
The king is render'd lost.

COUNT. This was your motive  
For Paris, was it ? speak.

HEL. My lord your son made me to think of this ;  
Else Paris, and the medicine, and the king,  
Had from the conversation of my thoughts  
Haply been absent then.

COUNT. But think you, Helen,  
If you should tender your supposed aid,  
He would receive it ? he and his physicians  
Are of a mind ; he, that they cannot help him,  
They, that they cannot help : how shall they credit 230  
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,

---

215 *For general sovereignty*] To serve as a sovereign remedy of universal application.

217-218 *As notes . . . note*] As prescriptions, whose inherent efficacy was greater than it was reputed to be.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT I

---

Embowell'd of their doctrine, have left off  
The danger to itself?

HEL.                   There's something in 't,  
More than my father's skill, which was the great'st  
Of his profession, that his good receipt  
Shall for my legacy be sanctified  
By the luckiest stars in heaven : and, would your honour  
But give me leave to try success, I 'ld venture  
The well-lost life of mine on his Grace's cure  
By such a day and hour.

COUNT.               Dost thou believe 't?                   240

HEL. Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNT. Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and  
love,

Means and attendants, and my loving greetings  
To those of mine in court : I 'll stay at home  
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt :  
Be gone to-morrow ; and be sure of this,  
What I can help thee to, thou shalt not miss. [*Exeunt.*]

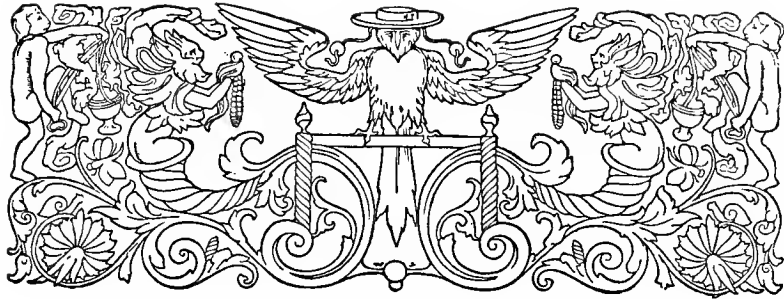
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232 *Embowell'd of their doctrine*] Exhausted of their learning.

233-235 *There's something . . . profession, that*] For *in't* Hanmer substitutes *hints* ; but the change, though widely adopted, is needless, if we understand "that" in the common Elizabethan sense of "to the effect that."

238 *success*] issue, result. "Succeeding" is similarly used, II, iii, 189, *infra*.





ACT SECOND—SCENE I—PARIS

THE KING'S PALACE

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING, attended with divers young Lords taking leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM, and PAROLLES*

KING



AREWELL, YOUNG lords; these warlike principles Do not throw from you: and you, my lords, farewell: Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain, all The gift doth stretch itself as 't is received, And is enough for both.

FIRST LORD. 'T is our hope, sir, After well-enter'd soldiers, to return

And find your Grace in health.

KING. No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart

1-2 *young lords . . . my lords*] This is the reading of the First Folio. Hanmer proposed to read *lord* in the singular in each case, but the plural is fully justified. The king appears to address him-

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

Will not confess he owes the malady  
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords ; 10  
Whether I live or die, be you the sons  
Of worthy Frenchmen : let higher Italy, —  
Those bated that inherit but the fall  
Of the last monarchy, — see that you come  
Not to woo honour, but to wed it ; when  
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,  
That fame may cry you loud : I say, farewell.

SEC. LORD. Health, at your bidding, serve your  
majesty !

KING. Those girls of Italy, take heed of them :  
They say, our French lack language to deny, 20  
If they demand : beware of being captives,  
Before you serve.

---

self to two parties of lords, of which one was to fight on the side of Florence, and the other on the side of Sienna. Already — cf. I, ii, 13–15, *supra* — he had given his courtiers leave to “stand on either part” in the Italian strife.

In the First Folio the First Lord is called “Lord G.” and the Second Lord “Lord E.” The same initials are repeated in the case of the two lords who reappear in iii, 2, *infra*, as well as in the case of another pair of French lords who figure in ii, 6, and iv, 3, *infra*. The initials “G” and “E” seem to be those of the actors who filled the parts in early productions of the piece. Goughe, Gilburne, and Ecclestone are mentioned among “the names of the principall actors in all these playes” in a preliminary page of the First Folio.

6 *After well-enter'd soldiers*] After (we have become) well initiated, well-trained soldiers.

12–14 *let higher Italy . . . monarchy*] let upper Italy — let your humbled foemen who inherit merely the decadence of the ended (Roman) empire.

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

BOTH. Our hearts receive your warnings.  
KING. Farewell. Come hither to me. [*Exit.*]  
FIRST LORD. O my sweet lord, that you will stay  
behind us!  
PAR. 'T is not his fault, the spark.  
SEC. LORD. O, 't is brave wars!  
PAR. Most admirable: I have seen those wars.  
BER. I am commanded here, and kept a coil with  
"Too young," and "the next year," and "'tis too early."  
PAR. An thy mind stand to 't, boy, steal away bravely.  
BER. I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock, 30  
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,  
Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn  
But one to dance with! By heaven, I 'll steal away.  
FIRST LORD. There 's honour in the theft.  
PAR. Commit it, count.  
SEC. LORD. I am your accessory; and so, farewell.  
BER. I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured body.  
FIRST LORD. Farewell, captain.  
SEC. LORD. Sweet Monsieur Parolles!  
PAR. Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin.  
Good sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals: you 40  
shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain  
Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on

27 *kept a coil with*] pestered with fussy objections to my going.

30 *the forehorse to a smock*] the squire of petticoats. The forehorse was the leading horse of a team, and was often pranked out in ribbons.

32 *no sword*] Men wore short swords when they danced. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, III, ii, 35-36:

"He at Philippi kept  
His sword e'en like a dancer."

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

his sinister cheek ; it was this very sword entrenched it :  
say to him, I live ; and observe his reports for me.

FIRST LORD. We shall, noble captain. [*Exeunt Lords.*]

PAR. Mars dote on you for his novices ! what will  
ye do ?

BER. Stay : the king.

*Re-enter KING*

PAR. [*Aside to Ber.*] Use a more spacious ceremony to  
the noble lords ; you have restrained yourself within the  
list of too cold an adieu : be more expressive to them : <sup>50</sup>  
for they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there  
do muster true gait, eat, speak, and move under the in-  
fluence of the most received star ; and though the devil  
lead the measure, such are to be followed : after them,  
and take a more dilated farewell.

BER. And I will do so.

PAR. Worthy fellows ; and like to prove most sinewy  
sword-men. [*Exeunt Bertram and Parolles.*]

*Enter LAFEU*

LAF. [*Kneeling*] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my  
tidings.

KING. I 'll fee thee to stand up. 60

---

51-52 *in the cap of the time, . . . move*] in the height of the fashion ; in  
them is concentrated authentic etiquette in regard to eating,  
speaking, and moving.

60 *fee*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *see*. The meaning  
is, " I 'ld reward thee if I could stand up."

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

LAF. Then here 's a man stands, that has brought his  
pardon.

I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy ;  
And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

KING. I would I had ; so I had broke thy pate,  
And ask'd thee mercy for 't.

LAF. Good faith, across : but, my good lord, 't is thus ;  
Will you be cured of your infirmity ?

KING. No.

LAF. O, will you eat no grapes, my royal fox ?  
Yes, but you will my noble grapes, an if 70  
My royal fox could reach them : I have seen a medicine  
That 's able to breathe life into a stone,  
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary  
With spritely fire and motion ; whose simple touch  
Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay,  
To give great Charlemain a pen in 's hand,  
And write to her a love-line.

KING. What " her " is this ?

LAF. Why, Doctor She : my lord, there 's one arrived,  
If you will see her : now, by my faith and honour,  
If seriously I may convey my thoughts 80  
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke  
With one that, in her sex, her years, profession,

---

66 *across*] Lafeu's meaning is that the king's retort is clumsy. To thrust a lance in a tilting match "across" [the body of] an adversary instead of pushing the point towards him was a sign of awkwardness.

76 *great Charlemain*] There was a tradition that Charlemagne late in life made a vain endeavour to learn to write.

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

Wisdom and constancy, hath amazed me more  
Than I dare blame my weakness : will you see her,  
For that is her demand, and know her business ?  
That done, laugh well at me.

KING. Now, good Lafeu,  
Bring in the admiration ; that we with thee  
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine  
By wondering how thou took'st it.

LAF. Nay, I'll fit you,  
And not be all day neither. [Exit. 90

KING. Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

*Re-enter LAFEU, with HELENA*

LAF. Nay, come your ways.

KING. This haste hath wings indeed.

LAF. Nay, come your ways ;  
This is his majesty, say your mind to him :  
A traitor you do look like ; but such traitors  
His majesty seldom fears : I am Cressid's uncle,  
That dare leave two together ; fare you well. [Exit.

KING. Now, fair one, does your business follow us ?

HEL. Ay, my good lord.  
Gerard de Narbon was my father ; 100  
In what he did profess, well found.

KING. I knew him.

HEL. The rather will I spare my praises towards him ;

---

83-84 *Than I dare blame my weakness*] Than I care to admit for fear of  
exposing myself to the reproach of weakness.

96 *Cressid's uncle*] Pandarus, a leading character in Shakespeare's *Troil.*  
*and Cress.*

SCENE I ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Knowing him is enough. On 's bed of death  
Many receipts he gave me ; chiefly one,  
Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,  
And of his old experience the only darling,  
He bade me store up, as a triple eye,  
Safer than mine own two, more dear ; I have so :  
And, hearing your high majesty is touch'd  
With that malignant cause, wherein the honour 110  
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,  
I come to tender it and my appliance,  
With all bound humbleness.

KING. We thank you, maiden ;  
But may not be so credulous of cure,  
When our most learned doctors leave us, and  
The congregated college have concluded  
That labouring art can never ransom nature  
From her inaidible estate ; I say we must not  
So stain our judgement, or corrupt our hope,  
To prostitute our past-cure malady 120  
To empirics, or to dissever so  
Our great self and our credit, to esteem  
A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

HEL. My duty, then, shall pay me for my pains :  
I will no more enforce mine office on you ;

---

107 *triple eye*] a third eye. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, I, i, 12: "The *triple* pillar of the world."

121-123 *dissever so . . . deem*] I must not so disjoin my person and place from their fit dignity by setting value on an ignorant offer of help, when I deem my case to be beyond the reach of intelligent assistance.

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts  
A modest one, to bear me back again.

KING. I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful :  
Thou thought'st to help me ; and such thanks I  
give

As one near death to those that wish him live : 130  
But, what at full I know, thou know'st no part ;  
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

HEL. What I can do can do no hurt to try,  
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.  
He that of greatest works is finisher,  
Oft does them by the weakest minister :  
So holy writ in babes hath judgement shown,  
When judges have been babes ; great floods have flown  
From simple sources ; and great seas have dried,  
When miracles have by the greatest been denied 140  
Oft expectation fails, and most oft there  
Where most it promises ; and oft it hits  
Where hope is coldest, and despair most fits.

KING. I must not hear thee ; fare thee well, kind  
maid ;

Thy pains not used must by thyself be paid :  
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

HEL. Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd :  
It is not so with Him that all things knows,  
As 't is with us that square our guess by shows ;  
But most it is presumption in us when 150

---

143 *fits*] Theobald's emendation for the Folio reading *shifts*.





ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

Sear'd otherwise, ne worse of worst extended,  
With vilest torture let my life be ended.

KING. Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth  
speak

His powerful sound within an organ weak :  
And what impossibility would slay  
In common sense; sense saves another way.  
Thy life is dear ; for all, that life can rate  
Worth name of life, in thee hath estimate,  
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all  
That happiness and prime can happy call :  
Thou this to hazard needs must intimate  
Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.  
Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try,  
That ministers thine own death if I die.

180

HEL. If I break time, or flinch in property  
Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die,  
And well deserved : not helping, death's my fee ;  
But, if I help, what do you promise me ?

189

172 *ne worse of worst extended*] This is the reading of the First Folio. In the Second and later folios *no* was substituted for *ne*. "Ne" usually means "nor," but the meaning seems here to be "nay." Helena says: "let the worse come to the worst, let untoward fate be strained to the worse degree of what is very bad,—in effect, let me die under vilest torture."

176–177 *And what impossibility . . . another way*] A notion, which, in virtue of its incredibility, is liable to be destroyed by common sense, may survive after all; perception or sensation has means of preserving a notion in spite of its being rejected by ordinary reason.

180] Theobald proposed to insert *virtue* after *courage*, so as to complete the metre.

186 *flinch in property*] fail in any essential particular.

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

KING. Make thy demand.

HEL. But will you make it even ?

KING. Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of  
heaven.

HEL. Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly  
hand

What husband in thy power I will command :  
Exempted be from me the arrogance  
To choose from forth the royal blood of France,  
My low and humble name to propagate  
With any branch or image of thy state ;  
But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know  
Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow

KING. Here is my hand ; the premises observed, 200  
Thy will by my performance shall be served :  
So make the choice of thy own time ; for I,  
Thy resolved patient, on thee still rely.  
More should I question thee, and more I must,  
Though more to know could not be more to trust,  
From whence thou camest, how tended on : but  
rest

Unquestion'd welcome, and undoubted blest.  
Give me some help here, ho ! If thou proceed  
As high as word, my deed shall match thy deed.

[*Flourish. Exeunt*

---

190 *make it even*] give precisely what is asked.

SCENE II — ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter* COUNTESS *and* Clown

COUNT. Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

CLO. I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught: I know my business is but to the court.

COUNT. To the court! why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

CLO. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court: he that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and, indeed, such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court; but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

COUNT. Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all questions.

CLO. It is like a barber's chair, that fits all buttocks, the pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn-buttock, or any buttock.

COUNT. Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

CLO. As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffeta punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for

<sup>21</sup> *Tib's rush, etc.*] "Tib" and "Tom" were used for "lad" and "lass" much like "Jack" and "Jill." "Tib's rush" means a ring made of a rush, commonly used in rural districts as a love token.

SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Shrove Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth, nay, as the pudding to his skin.

COUNT. Have you, I say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?

CLO. From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question. 30

COUNT. It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit all demands.

CLO. But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that belongs to 't. Ask me if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

COUNT. To be young again, if we could: I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

CLO. O Lord, sir! There's a simple putting off. 40  
More, more, a hundred of them.

COUNT. Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

CLO. O Lord, sir! Thick, thick, spare not me.

COUNT. I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

CLO. O Lord, sir! Nay, put me to 't, I warrant you.

COUNT. You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

CLO. O Lord, sir! spare not me.

COUNT. Do you cry, "O Lord, sir!" at your whipping, and "spare not me"? Indeed your "O Lord, sir!" is very sequent to your whipping: you would answer 50  
very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to 't.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

CLO. I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my "O Lord, sir!" I see things may serve long, but not serve ever.

COUNT. I play the noble housewife with the time,  
To entertain 't so merrily with a fool.

CLO. O Lord, sir! why, there 't serves well again.

COUNT. An end, sir; to your business. Give Helen  
this,

And urge her to a present answer back:  
Commend me to my kinsmen and my son:  
This is not much.

60

CLO. Not much commendation to them.

COUNT. Not much employment for you: you understand me?

CLO. Most fruitfully: I am there before my legs.

COUNT. Haste you again. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III—PARIS

*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES*

LAF. They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we

---

<sup>3</sup> *causeless*] Coleridge points out that a cause is only predicable of things natural (phenomena), and that Shakespeare is strictly accurate from a philosophical point of view in describing things super-

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

make trifles of terrors ; ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.

PAR. Why, 't is the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.

BER. And so 't is.

LAF. To be relinquished of the artists, — 10

PAR. So I say ; both of Galen and Paracelsus.

LAF. Of all the learned and authentic fellows, —

PAR. Right ; so I say.

LAF. That gave him out incurable, —

PAR. Why, there 't is ; so say I too.

LAF. Not to be helped, —

PAR. Right ; as 't were, a man assured of a —

LAF. Uncertain life, and sure death.

PAR. Just, you say well ; so would I have said.

LAF. I may truly say, it is a novelty to the world. 20

PAR. It is, indeed : if you will have it in showing, you shall read it in — what do ye call there ?

LAF. A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.

PAR. That 's it ; I would have said the very same.

LAF. Why, your dolphin is not lustier : 'fore me, I speak in respect —

PAR. Nay, 't is strange, 't is very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it ; and he 's of a most facinerious spirit that will not acknowledge it to be the —

---

natural (noumena) as "causeless," *i. e.* without mundane origin or connection with matter.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

LAF. Very hand of heaven.

30

PAR. Ay, so I say.

LAF. In a most weak —

PAR. And debile minister, great power, great transcendence : which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone the recovery of the king, as to be —

LAF. Generally thankful.

PAR. I would have said it ; you say well. Here comes the king.

*Enter KING, HELENA, and Attendants*

LAF. Lustig, as the Dutchman says : I'll like a maid the better, whilst I have a tooth in my head : why, he's 40 able to lead her a coranto.

PAR. Mort du vinaigre ! is not this Helen ?

LAF. 'Fore God, I think so.

KING. Go, call before me all the lords in court.

Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side ;  
And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense  
Thou hast repeal'd, a second time receive  
The confirmation of my promised gift,  
Which but attends thy naming.

*Enter three or four Lords*

Fair maid, send forth thine eye : this youthful parcel 50  
Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,  
O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice

---

39 *Lustig*] The Dutch word is "Lustigh," meaning lusty, vigorous.  
52 *father's voice*] father's approval. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 54.



SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

I have to use : thy frank election make ;  
Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

HEL. To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress  
Fall, when Love please ! marry, to each, but one !

LAF. I 'ld give bay Curtal and his furniture,  
My mouth no more were broken than these boys',  
And writ as little beard.

KING. Peruse them well :  
Not one of those but had a noble father. 60

HEL. Gentlemen,  
Heaven hath through me restored the king to health.

ALL. We understand it, and thank heaven for  
you.

HEL. I am a simple maid ; and therein wealthiest,  
That I protest I simply am a maid.  
Please it your majesty, I have done already :  
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,  
“ We blush that thou shouldst choose ; but, be refused,  
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever ;  
We 'll ne'er come there again.”

KING. Make choice ; and, see, 70  
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

HEL. Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly ;  
And to imperial Love, that god most high,  
Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit ?

FIRST LORD. And grant it.

HEL. Thanks, sir ; all the rest is mute.

---

75 *all the rest is mute*] I will say no more. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 380: “ The rest is silence.”

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

LAF. I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-  
ace for my life.

HEL. The honour, sir, that flames in your fair  
eyes,

Before I speak, too threateningly replies :  
Love make your fortunes twenty times above 80  
Her that so wishes and her humble love !

SEC. LORD. No better, if you please.

HEL. My wish receive,  
Which great Love grant ! and so, I take my leave.

LAF. Do all they deny her ? An they were sons of  
mine, I 'd have them whipped ; or I would send them to  
the Turk, to make eunuchs of.

HEL. Be not afraid that I your hand should take ;  
I 'll never do you wrong for your own sake :  
Blessing upon your vows ! and in your bed  
Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed ! 90

LAF. These boys are boys of ice, they 'll none have  
her : sure, they are bastards to the English ; the French  
ne'er got 'em.

HEL. You are too young, too happy, and too good,  
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

FOURTH LORD. Fair one, I think not so.

LAF. There 's one grape yet ; I am sure thy father

---

76 *ames-ace*] ambs-ace, the two aces, the lowest throw of the dice, a  
thing of no value. The general meaning of Lafeu's somewhat  
lame irony seems to be, "I had rather be a competitor in this con-  
test than risk my life for nothing at all."

97-99 *I am sure . . . already*] Thy father put some spirit into you ;  
but I know enough of you to know you for an ass.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

drunk wine : but if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen ; I have known thee already.

HEL. [*To Bertram*] I dare not say I take you ; but I give 100

Me and my service, ever whilst I live,  
Into your guiding power. This is the man.

KING. Why, then, young Bertram, take her ; she's thy wife.

BER. My wife, my liege ! I shall beseech your highness,  
In such a business give me leave to use  
The help of mine own eyes.

KING. Know'st thou not, Bertram,  
What she has done for me ?

BER. Yes, my good lord ;  
But never hope to know why I should marry her.

KING. Thou know'st she has raised me from my sickly bed.

BER. But follows it, my lord, to bring me down 110  
Must answer for your raising ? I know her well :  
She had her breeding at my father's charge.  
A poor physician's daughter my wife ! Disdain  
Rather corrupt me ever !

KING. 'T is only title thou disdain'st in her, the which I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,  
Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,  
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off

113-114 *Disdain . . . ever*] May ignominy or disgrace otherwise taint me for ever.

117 *Of colour, etc.*] As far as colour, etc., are concerned.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

In differences so mighty. If she be  
All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest, 120  
A poor physician's daughter, thou dislikest  
Of virtue for the name: but do not so:  
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed  
The place is dignified by the doer's deed:  
Where great additions swell's and virtue none,  
It is a dropsied honour. Good alone  
Is good without a name. Vileness is so:  
The property by what it is should go,  
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;  
In these to nature she's immediate heir, 130  
And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn,  
Which challenges itself as honour's born,  
And is not like the sire: honours thrive,  
When rather from our acts we them derive  
Than our foregoers: the mere word's a slave  
Debosh'd on every tomb, on every grave  
A lying trophy; and as oft is dumb  
Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb  
Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?  
If thou canst like this creature as a maid, 140  
I can create the rest: virtue and she  
Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.  
BER. I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.  
KING. Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive  
to choose.

---

127 *Vileness is so*] Vileness is in the same case.

132 *challenges itself as*] asserts a claim to be.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

HEL. That you are well restored, my lord, I 'm glad:  
Let the rest go.

KING. My honour 's at the stake ; which to defeat,  
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,  
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift ;  
That dost in vile misprision shackle up 150  
My love and her desert ; that canst not dream,  
We, poisoning us in her defective scale,  
Shall weigh thee to the beam ; that wilt not know,  
It is in us to plant thine honour where  
We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt :  
Obey our will, which travails in thy good :  
Believe not thy disdain, but presently  
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right  
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims ;  
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever 160  
Into the staggers and the careless lapse  
Of youth and ignorance ; both my revenge and hate  
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,  
Without all terms of pity. Speak ; thine answer.

147 *which to defeat*] and to destroy this risk of injury to my honour.

150 *in vile misprision shackle up*] contemptibly undervalue or disdain.  
"Misprision" means here "the act of undervaluing." Cf. III, ii,  
29, *infra*, where the countess talks of "the misprising of" Helena  
by her son.

152-153 *We, poisoning . . . beam*] We, throwing the weight of our in-  
fluence in her favour or scale, which of itself were deficient in weight,  
shall make the scale in which you are placed strike the beam,  
*i. e.*, weigh nothing at all.

161 *staggers*] strictly speaking, apoplexy in horses. Here "staggering  
helplessness" or "bewilderment" (of men). Cf. *Cymb.*, V, v, 233 :  
"How come these *staggers* on me?"

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

BER. Pardon, my gracious lord ; for I submit  
My fancy to your eyes : when I consider  
What great creation and what dole of honour  
Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late  
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now  
The praised of the king ; who, so ennobled, 170  
Is as 't were born so.

KING. Take her by the hand,  
And tell her she is thine : to whom I promise  
A counterpoise ; if not to thy estate,  
A balance more replete.

BER. I take her hand.

KING. Good fortune and the favour of the king  
Smile upon this contract ; whose ceremony  
Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,  
And be perform'd to-night : the solemn feast  
Shall more attend upon the coming space,  
Expecting absent friends. As thou lovest her, 180  
Thy love 's to me religious ; else, does err.

[*Exeunt all but Lafeu and Parolles.*]

LAF. Do you hear, monsieur ? a word with you.

PAR. Your pleasure, sir ?

LAF. Your lord and master did well to make his re-  
cantation.

---

178 *Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief*] Shall rightly follow immediately on the short and summary engagement. "Brief" here means "a short" verbal assurance. Cf. V, iii, 137, *infra*, "a sweet verbal *brief*."

179-180 *Shall more attend . . . friends*] shall take place at a longer interval hereafter, awaiting the coming of absent friends.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. Recantation! My lord! my master!

LAF. Ay; is it not a language I speak?

PAR. A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master!

LAF. Are you companion to the Count Rousillon? 190

PAR. To any count, to all counts, to what is man.

LAF. To what is count's man: count's master is of another style.

PAR. You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

LAF. I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which title age cannot bring thee.

PAR. What I dare too well do, I dare not do. 198

LAF. I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass: yet the scarfs and the banners about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burthen. I have now found thee; when I lose thee again, I care not: yet art thou good for nothing but taking up; and that thou'rt scarce worth.

---

189 *succeeding*] sequel, result, issue. "Success" is similarly used. I, i, 138, *supra*.

196 *I write man*] I declare myself a man. Cf. III, v, 63, *infra*: "*I write good creature*."

199 *for two ordinaries*] for two dinners, for the time spent over two dinners with you.

205 *taking up*] There is a play here on the two meanings of this expression "buying on credit" and "contradicting or exposing error in conversation."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

PAR. Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee, —

LAF. Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if— Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well: thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand. 212

PAR. My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

LAF. Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

PAR. I have not, my lord, deserved it.

LAF. Yes, good faith, every dram of it; and I will not bate thee a scruple.

PAR. Well, I shall be wiser. 218

LAF. Ev'n as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack o' the contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf and beaten, thou shalt find what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge, that I may say in the default, he is a man I know.

PAR. My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

LAF. I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and my poor doing eternal: for doing I am past; as I will by thee, in what motion age will give me leave. [*Exit.* 228

PAR. Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me; scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must be

---

210 *a hen*] a coward. Cf. "hen-hearted," "chicken-hearted."

*window of lattice*] a window with a blind that may be seen through.

227-228 *for doing . . . leave*] My time of doing or action is past, so I will pass by thee (*i. e.* leave thee) as quickly as age permits.

There is a lame quibble on "past" as a participle of "pass."



SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

patient; there is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have of— I'll beat him, an if I could but meet him again.

*Re-enter LAFEU*

LAF. Sirrah, your lord and master's married; there's news for you: you have a new mistress.

PAR. I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs: he is my good lord: whom I serve above is my master. 240

LAF. Who? God?

PAR. Ay, sir.

LAF. The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o' this fashion? dost make hose of thy sleeves? do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee: methinks't, thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee: I think thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee. 250

PAR. This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

LAF. Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond, and no true traveller: you are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you. [*Exit.*]

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

PAR. Good, very good ; it is so then : good, very good ; let it be concealed awhile.

*Re-enter* BERTRAM

BER. Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever ! 260

PAR. What 's the matter, sweet-heart ?

BER. Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,  
I will not bed her.

PAR. What, what, sweet-heart ?

BER. O my Parolles, they have married me !  
I 'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.

PAR. France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits  
The tread of a man's foot : to the wars !

BER. There 's letters from my mother : what the  
import is, I know not yet. 270

PAR. Ay, that would be known. To the wars, my  
boy, to the wars !

He wears his honour in a box unseen,  
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,  
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,  
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet  
Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions  
France is a stable ; we that dwell in 't jades ;  
Therefore, to the war !

BER. It shall be so : I 'll send her to my house,  
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her, 280  
And wherefore I am fled ; write to the king  
That which I durst not speak : his present gift  
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields,

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Where noble fellows strike : war is no strife  
To the dark house and the detested wife.

PAR. Will this capriccio hold in thee, art sure ?

BER. Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.  
I'll send her straight away : to-morrow  
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

PAR. Why, these balls bound ; there's noise in it.  
'T is hard :

290

A young man married is a man that's marr'd :  
Therefore away, and leave her bravely ; go :  
The king has done you wrong : but, hush, 't is so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — PARIS

*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Enter HELENA and Clown*

HEL. My mother greets me kindly : is she well ?

CLO. She is not well ; but yet she has her health :  
she's very merry ; but yet she is not well : but thanks  
be given, she's very well and wants nothing i' the world ;  
but yet she is not well.

HEL. If she be very well, what does she ail, that she's  
not very well ?

---

285 *To the dark house, etc.*] Compared with the gloomy home and  
the hated wife. *Detested* is Rowe's correction for *detected* of the  
Folios.

290 *Why, these balls . . . hard*] Proverbial expressions meaning " This  
goes well."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

CLO. Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

HEL. What two things?

CLO. One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send 10  
her quickly! the other, that she's in earth, from whence  
God send her quickly!

*Enter PAROLLES*

PAR. Bless you, my fortunate lady!

HEL. I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine  
own good fortunes.

PAR. You had my prayers to lead them on; and to  
keep them on, have them still. O, my knave, how does  
my old lady?

CLO. So that you had her wrinkles, and I her money,  
I would she did as you say. 20

PAR. Why, I say nothing.

CLO. Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a  
man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing: to say  
nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have  
nothing, is to be a great part of your title; which is  
within a very little of nothing.

PAR. Away! thou'rt a knave.

CLO. You should have said, sir, before a knave thou'rt  
a knave; that's, before me thou'rt a knave: this had  
been truth, sir. 30

PAR. Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

CLO. Did you find me in yourself, sir? or were you  
taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable; and

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.

PAR. A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.  
Madam, my lord will go away to-night ;  
A very serious business calls on him.  
The great prerogative and rite of love,  
Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge ; 40  
But puts it off to a compell'd restraint ;  
Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets,  
Which they distil now in the curbed time,  
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy,  
And pleasure drown the brim.

HEL. What's his will else ?

PAR. That you will take your instant leave o' the  
king,  
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,  
Strengthen'd with what apology you think  
May make it probable need.

HEL. What more commands he ?

PAR. That, having this obtain'd, you presently 50  
Attend his further pleasure.

HEL. In every thing I wait upon his will.

PAR. I shall report it so.

HEL. I pray you. [*Exit Parolles.*] Come, sirrah.  
[*Exeunt.*]

---

43 *curbed time*] the season of restraint.

49 *make it probable need*] give it a specious appearance of necessity.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

SCENE V — PARIS

*THE KING'S PALACE*

*Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM*

LAF. But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

BER. Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

LAF. You have it from his own deliverance.

BER. And by other warranted testimony.

LAF. Then my dial goes not true: I took this lark for a bunting.

BER. I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge, and accordingly valiant.

LAF. I have then sinned against his experience and transgressed against his valour; and my state that way<sup>10</sup> is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes: I pray you, make us friends; I will pursue the amity.

*Enter PAROLLES*

PAR. These things shall be done, sir. [To Bertram.]

LAF. Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

PAR. Sir?

LAF. O, I know him well, I, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman, a very good tailor.

---

<sup>6</sup> a *bunting*] a bird with plumage resembling that of a lark, but without the lark's note.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

BER. Is she gone to the king? [*Aside to Parolles.*

PAR. She is. 20

BER. Will she away to-night?

PAR. As you 'll have her.

BER. I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,  
Given order for our horses; and to-night,  
When I should take possession of the bride,  
End ere I do begin.

LAF. A good traveller is something at the latter end of  
a dinner; but one that lies three thirds, and uses a known  
truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should be once  
heard, and thrice beaten. God save you, captain. 30

BER. Is there any unkindness between my lord and  
you, monsieur?

PAR. I know not how I have deserved to run into my  
lord's displeasure.

LAF. You have made shift to run into 't, boots and  
spurs and all, like him that leaped into the custard; and  
out of it you 'll run again, rather than suffer question for  
your residence.

BER. It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

LAF. And shall do so ever, though I took him at 's 40  
prayers. Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of  
me, there can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of

---

36 *leaped into the custard*] At the Lord Mayor's banquets in the city  
of London, the city fool was wont to leap into a custard prepared  
for the purpose. Cf. Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*, I, i, 95-97:

"He may perchance, in tale of a Sheriff's dinner,  
Skip with a rime o' the Table, from New-Nothing,  
And take his *Almaine-leap* into a custard."

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

this man is his clothes. Trust him not in matter of heavy consequence ; I have kept of them tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur : I have spoken better of you than you have or will to deserve at my hand ; but we must do good against evil. [Exit.

PAR. An idle lord, I swear.

BER. I think so.

PAR. Why, do you not know him ? 50

BER. Yes, I do know him well, and common  
speech

Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

*Enter HELENA*

HEL. I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,  
Spoke with the king, and have procured his leave  
For present parting ; only he desires  
Some private speech with you.

BER. I shall obey his will.  
You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,  
Which holds not colour with the time, nor does  
The ministration and required office  
On my particular. Prepared I was not 60  
For such a business ; therefore am I found  
So much unsettled : this drives me to entreat you,  
That presently you take your way for home,  
And rather muse than ask why I entreat you ;  
For my respects are better than they seem,

---

60 *On my particular*] On my part, as far as I am concerned.

65 *respects*] reasons, motives.



SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

And my appointments have in them a need  
Greater than shows itself at the first view  
To you that know them not. This to my mother :  
[Giving a letter.]

'T will be two days ere I shall see you ; so,  
I leave you to your wisdom.

HEL. Sir, I can nothing say, 70  
But that I am your most obedient servant.

BER. Come, come, no more of that.

HEL. And ever shall  
With true observance seek to eke out that  
Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd  
To equal my great fortune.

BER. Let that go :  
My haste is very great : farewell ; hie home.

HEL. Pray, sir, your pardon.

BER. Well, what would you say ?

HEL. I am not worthy of the wealth I owe ;  
Nor dare I say 't is mine, and yet it is ;  
But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal 80  
What law does vouch mine own.

BER. What would you have ?

HEL. Something ; and scarce so much : nothing,  
indeed.

I would not tell you what I would, my lord : faith,  
yes ;

Strangers and foes do sunder, and not kiss.

BER. I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

HEL. I shall not break your bidding, good my  
lord.

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT II

---

BER. Where are my other men, monsieur? Farewell!

[*Exit Helena.*]

Go thou toward home; where I will never come,  
Whilst I can shake my sword, or hear the drum.  
Away, and for our flight.

PAR. Bravely, coragio! [*Exeunt.* 90]

---

87 *Where are my other, etc.*] Theobald first gave this speech to Bertram.  
In the earlier editions it is assigned to Helena.

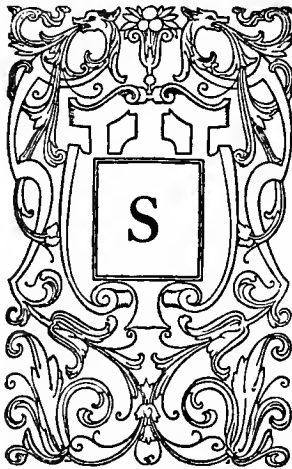


ACT THIRD — SCENE I — FLORENCE

THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, attended ; the two Frenchmen  
with a troop of soldiers*

DUKE



O THAT FROM POINT  
to point now have you heard  
The fundamental reasons of this  
war,  
Whose great decision hath much  
blood let forth  
And more thirsts after.

FIRST LORD. Holy seems the  
quarrel  
Upon your Grace's part ; black  
and fearful  
On the opposer.

DUKE. Therefore we marvel  
much our cousin France  
Would in so just a business shut his bosom  
Against our borrowing prayers.

SEC. LORD.

Good my lord,

<sup>9</sup> *borrowing prayers*] prayers that would borrow of him assistance.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

The reasons of our state I cannot yield, 10  
But like a common and an outward man,  
That the great figure of a council frames  
By self-unable motion : therefore dare not  
Say what I think of it, since I have found  
Myself in my incertain grounds to fail  
As often as I guess'd.

DUKE. Be it his pleasure.

FIRST LORD. But I am sure the younger of our  
nature,  
That surfeit on their ease, will day by day  
Come here for physic.

DUKE. Welcome shall they be ;  
And all the honours that can fly from us 20  
Shall on them settle. You know your places well ;  
When better fall, for your avails they fell :  
To-morrow to the field. [Flourish.]

---

10-13 *The reasons . . . motion*] I know nothing of politics, except, like any ordinary outsider, who forms some idea of what the great councillors determine by effort, which of itself is inadequate to attain full knowledge. "Self-unable motion" is "mental or physical activity which is not self-sufficing, and bears no fruit.

17 *younger of our nature*] young men of our rank or condition.

22 *When . . . fell*] When men in higher positions fall, their fall must be to your advantage ; you know the usual conditions of promotion.

SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SCENE II — ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter* COUNTESS *and* Clown

COUNT. It hath happened all as I would have had it, save that he comes not along with her.

CLO. By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

COUNT. By what observance, I pray you ?

CLO. Why, he will look upon his boot and sing ; mend the ruff and sing ; ask questions and sing ; pick his teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

COUNT. Let me see what he writes, and when he 10 means to come. [Opening a letter.]

CLO. I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court : our old ling and our Isbels o' the country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o' the court : the brains of my Cupid's knocked out, and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

---

<sup>7</sup> *the ruff*] Here used of the boot, the top edge of which often had an ornamental ruff or ruffle. Cf. Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, IV, 2, *ad. fin.*, "the ruffle of my boot."

<sup>13</sup> *old ling*] literally, "stale salt fish, which was ordinary Lenten fare." The words may here be applied to old women. Such usage adds very little point to the clown's contrast of women of the court with those of the country. It has been ingeniously suggested that, both in this and the next line, *old ling* is a misreading of *codlings*, *i. e.* "raw youths."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

COUNT. What have we here ?

CLO. E'en that you have there. [Exit.]

COUNT. [*reads*] I have sent you a daughter-in-law : she hath recovered the king, and undone me. I have wedded her, not bed-<sup>20</sup>ded her ; and sworn to make the "not" eternal. You shall hear I am run away : know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you,  
Your unfortunate son,

BERTRAM.

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy,  
To fly the favours of so good a king ;  
To pluck his indignation on thy head  
By the misprising of a maid too virtuous  
For the contempt of empire.

30

*Re-enter Clown*

CLO. O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady !

COUNT. What is the matter ?

CLO. Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort ; your son will not be killed so soon as I thought he would.

COUNT. Why should he be killed ?

CLO. So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does : the danger is in standing to 't ; that's the loss of men, though it be the getting of children. Here they <sup>40</sup>come will tell you more : for my part, I only hear your son was run away. [Exit.]

---

29 *misprising*] contemning. See note on ii, 3, 150, *supra*.

SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

*Enter HELENA and two Gentlemen*

FIRST GENT. Save you, good madam.

HEL. Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

SEC. GENT. Do not say so.

COUNT. Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen,  
I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief,  
That the first face of neither, on the start,  
Can woman me unto 't: where is my son, I pray you?

SEC. GENT. Madam, he's gone to serve the duke of  
Florence :

50

We met him thitherward ; for thence we came,  
And, after some dispatch in hand at court,  
Thither we bend again.

HEL. Look on his letter, madam ; here's my passport.  
[reads] When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which never  
shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I  
am father to, then call me husband : but in such a "then" I write  
a "never."

This is a dreadful sentence.

COUNT. Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

FIRST GENT. Ay, madam ; 60

And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pains.

COUNT. I prithee, lady, have a better cheer ;  
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,  
'Thou robb'st me of a moiety : he was my son ;

---

43 *First Gent.*] In the First Folio this character is called "French E,"  
and the "Second Gent." is called "French G." See note on II, i,  
1-2, *supra*.

49 *Can woman me unto 't:]* Can make me womanlike give way to  
emotion.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

But I do wash his name out of my blood,  
And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he ?

SEC. GENT. Ay, madam.

COUNT. And to be a soldier ?

SEC. GENT. Such is his noble purpose ; and, believe 't,  
The Duke will lay upon him all the honour  
That good convenience claims.

COUNT. Return you thither ? 70

FIRST GENT. Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of  
speed.

HEL. [*reads*] Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.  
'T is bitter.

COUNT. Find you that there ?

HEL. Ay, madam.

FIRST GENT. 'T is but the boldness of his hand, haply,  
which his heart was not consenting to.

COUNT. Nothing in France, until he have no wife !  
There 's nothing here that is too good for him  
But only she ; and she deserves a lord  
That twenty such rude boys might tend upon 80  
And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him ?

FIRST GENT. A servant only, and a gentleman  
Which I have sometime known.

COUNT. Parolles, was it not ?

FIRST GENT. Ay, my good lady, he.

COUNT. A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.  
My son corrupts a well-derived nature  
With his inducement.

---

87 *With his inducement*] Under his influence.



SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

FIRST GENT. Indeed, good lady,  
The fellow has a deal of that too much,  
Which holds him much to have.

COUNT. Y' are welcome, gentlemen. 90  
I will entreat you, when you see my son,  
To tell him that his sword can never win  
The honour that he loses: more I'll entreat you  
Written to bear along.

SEC. GENT. We serve you, madam,  
In that and all your worthiest affairs.

COUNT. Not so, but as we change our courtesies.  
Will you draw near? [*Exeunt Countess and Gentlemen.*]

HEL. "Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France."  
Nothing in France, until he has no wife!  
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France; 100  
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't I  
That chase thee from thy country and expose  
Those tender limbs of thine to the event  
Of the none-sparing war? and is it I  
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou  
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark  
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,

88-89 *The fellow . . . have*] "Too much" seems to be used as a substantive in the sense of "excess" (of vanity). Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 117-118: "For goodness, growing to a plurisy, Dies in his own *too much*. The meaning may be, "The fellow has a deal of that excess (of vanity) which gives him the repute of possessing an amplitude or sufficiency (of valour)." But the difficult phrase "holds him much to have" is usually reckoned to be corrupt. The suggestion "fouls him," etc., is worth attention.

96 *change our courtesies*] exchange or reciprocate civilities.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

That ride upon the violent speed of fire,  
Fly with false aim ; move the still-peering air, 110  
That sings with piercing ; do not touch my lord.  
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there ;  
Whoever charges on his forward breast,  
I am the caitiff that do hold him to 't ;  
And, though I kill him not, I am the cause  
His death was so effected : better 't were  
I met the ravin lion when he roar'd  
With sharp constraint of hunger ; better 't were  
That all the miseries which nature owes  
Were mine at once. No, come thou home, Rousillon,  
Whence honour but of danger wins a scar, 120  
As oft it loses all : I will be gone ;  
My being here it is that holds thee hence :  
Shall I stay here to do 't ? no, no, although  
The air of paradise did fan the house,  
And angels officed all : I will be gone,  
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,  
To console thine ear. Come, night ; end, day !  
For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away. [*Exit.*]

109-110 *the still-peering air . . . lord*] "Disturb or cut through the still, quiet air, which makes a singing or hissing sound as the bullet pierces it ; (take any course, do anything, but) do not touch my lord." "Still-peering" is an emphatic amplification of "still," *i. e.* quiet. "Peer" is frequently used for "appear," or "seen." The epithet is equivalent to "still seeming," "silent to all appearance."

119-121 *come . . . all*] come home from that place where the quest of honour gets at most out of a dangerous adventure nothing but a scar, while it as often loses everything.

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SCENE III — FLORENCE

*BEFORE THE DUKE'S PALACE*

*Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, Soldiers, Drum, and Trumpets*

DUKE. The general of our horse thou art ; and we,  
Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence  
Upon thy promising fortune.

BER. Sir, it is  
A charge too heavy for my strength ; but yet  
We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake  
To the extreme edge of hazard.

DUKE. Then go thou forth ;  
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,  
As thy auspicious mistress !

BER. This very day,  
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file :  
Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove 10  
A lover of thy drum, hater of love. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — ROUSILLON

*THE COUNT'S PALACE*

*Enter COUNTESS and Steward*

COUNT. Alas ! and would you take the letter of her ?  
Might you not know she would do as she has done,  
By sending me a letter ? Read it again.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

STEW. [*reads*] I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone :  
Ambitious love hath so in me offended,  
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,  
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.  
Write, write, that from the bloody course of war  
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie :  
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far 10  
His name with zealous fervour sanctify :  
His taken labours bid him me forgive ;  
I, his despicable Juno, sent him forth  
From courtly friends with camping foes to live,  
Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth :  
He is too good and fair for death and me ;  
Whom I myself embrace to set him free.

COUNT. Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest  
words !

Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much,  
As letting her pass so : had I spoke with her, 20  
I could have well diverted her intents,  
Which thus she hath prevented.

STEW. Pardon me, madam :  
If I had given you this at over-night,  
She might have been o'erta'en ; and yet she writes,  
Pursuit would be but vain.

COUNT. What angel shall  
Bless this unworthy husband ? he cannot thrive,

---

<sup>4</sup> *Saint Jaques' pilgrim*] Shakespeare invented the reference to Saint Jaques (Saint James the Greater), but gives no precise indication as to which of the many shrines of the saint Helena pretends to make pilgrimage. She subsequently calls the saint "Jaques le Grand" and "great Saint Jaques," III, v, 31 and 92, *infra*.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear  
And loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath  
Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,  
To this unworthy husband of his wife ; 30  
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth  
That he does weigh too light : my greatest grief,  
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.  
Dispatch the most convenient messenger :  
When haply he shall hear that she is gone,  
He will return ; and hope I may that she,  
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,  
Led hither by pure love : which of them both  
Is dearest to me, I have no skill in sense  
To make distinction : provide this messenger : 40  
My heart is heavy and mine age is weak ;  
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V — FLORENCE. WITHOUT THE WALLS  
*A TUCKET AFAR OFF*

*Enter an old Widow of Florence, DIANA, VIOLENTA, and MARIANA,  
with other Citizens*

WID. Nay, come ; for if they do approach the city,  
we shall lose all the sight.

DIA. They say the French count has done most  
honourable service.

---

<sup>3</sup> DIA. *They say, etc.*] The Cambridge editors assign this speech to  
Violenta, who, though mentioned in the stage direction, does not  
figure among the speakers in the old editions.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

WID. It is reported that he has taken their greatest commander ; and that with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother. [*Tucket.*] We have lost our labour ; they are gone a contrary way : hark ! you may know by their trumpets.

MAR. Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this <sup>10</sup> French earl : the honour of a maid is her name ; and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

WID. I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited by a gentleman his companion.

MAR. I know that knave ; hang him ! one Parolles : a filthy officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl. Beware of them, Diana ; their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of lust, are not the things they go under : many a maid hath been seduced by them ; and the misery is, example, that so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for <sup>20</sup> all that dissuade succession, but that they are limed with the twigs that threaten them. I hope I need not to advise you further ; but I hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

DIA. You shall not need to fear me.

WID. I hope so.

---

19 *go under*] pass for, profess to be.

21 *dissuade succession*] dissuade from following the same track.

22 *limed with the twigs*] ensnared with the twigs, as in hunting wild animals. Cf. *infra*, III, vi, 97.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

*Enter HELENA, disguised like a Pilgrim*

Look, here comes a pilgrim : I know she will lie at my house ; thither they send one another : I'll question her.  
God save you, pilgrim ! whither are you bound ? 30

HEL. To Saint Jaques le Grand.

Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you ?

WID. At the Saint Francis here beside the port.

HEL. Is this the way ?

WID. Ay, marry, is 't. [*A march afar.*] Hark you !  
they come this way.

If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,

But till the troops come by,

I will conduct you where you shall be lodged ;

The rather, for I think I know your hostess

As ample as myself.

HEL. Is it yourself ? 40

WID. If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HEL. I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

WID. You came, I think, from France ?

HEL. I did so.

WID. Here you shall see a countryman of yours  
That has done worthy service.

HEL. His name, I pray you ?

DIA. The Count Rousillon : know you such a one ?

HEL. But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him :  
His face I know not.

DIA. Whatsome'er he is,

---

40 *ample*] fully, well.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,  
As't is reported, for the king had married him 50  
Against his liking: think you it is so?

HEL. Ay, surely, mere the truth: I know his lady.

DIA. There is a gentleman that serves the count  
Reports but coarsely of her.

HEL. What's his name?

DIA. Monsieur Parolles.

HEL. O, I believe with him,  
In argument of praise, or to the worth  
Of the great count himself, she is too mean  
To have her name repeated: all her deserving  
Is a reserved honesty, and that  
I have not heard examined.

DIA. Alas, poor lady! 60  
'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife  
Of a detesting lord.

WID. I write good creature, wheresoe'er she is,  
Her heart weighs sadly: this young maid might do her  
A shrewd turn, if she pleased.

HEL. How do you mean?  
May be the amorous count solicits her  
In the unlawful purpose.

WID. He does indeed;

49 *He's bravely taken*] He is held in high esteem.

52 *mere the truth*] absolutely true.

63 *I write good creature*] I declare her to be good creature. Cf. II, iii, 196, *supra*, "*I write man*." *I write* is the First Folio reading for which *I right* [*i. e.* Ay, right;] *good creature* is substituted in the Second and later Folios and has been adopted by most eighteenth and nineteenth century editors.



SCENE V ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

And brokes with all that can in such a suit  
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid :  
But she is arm'd for him, and keeps her guard 70  
In honestest defence.

MAR. The gods forbid else !

WID. So, now they come :

*Drum and Colours*

*Enter BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and the whole army*

That is Antonio, the Duke's eldest son ;

That, Escalus.

HEL. Which is the Frenchman ?

DIA. He ;

That with the plume : 't is a most gallant fellow.

I would he loved his wife : if he were honest

He were much goodlier : is't not a handsome gentle-  
man ?

HEL. I like him well.

DIA. 'T is pity he is not honest : yond's that same  
knave

That leads him to these places : were I his lady, 80

I would poison that vile rascal.

HEL. Which is he ?

DIA. That jack-an-apes with scarfs : why is he mel-  
ancholy ?

HEL. Perchance he's hurt i' the battle.

PAR. Lose our drum ! well.

---

68 *brokes*] trades, acts as broker or pander.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

MAR. He's shrewdly vexed at something: look, he has spied us.

WID. Marry, hang you!

MAR. And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

[*Exeunt Bertram, Parolles, and army.*]

WID. The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you

90

Where you shall host: of enjoin'd penitents  
There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,  
Already at my house.

HEL. I humbly thank you:  
Please it this matron and this gentle maid  
To eat with us to-night, the charge and thanking  
Shall be for me; and, to requite you further,  
I will bestow some precepts of this virgin  
Worthy the note.

BOTH. We'll take your offer kindly. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI—CAMP BEFORE FLORENCE

*Enter BERTRAM and the two French Lords*

SEC. LORD. Nay, good my lord, put him to 't; let him have his way.

FIRST LORD. If your lordship find him not a hilding, hold me no more in your respect.

---

89 *ring-carrier*] pander, bawd.

91 *enjoin'd penitents*] persons under a vow of doing penance.

1 *Sec. Lord*] In the First Folio this character is called "Cap. E" and the "First Lord" is called "Cap. G." See note on II, i, 1-2, *supra*.

SCENE VI ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SEC. LORD. On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BER. Do you think I am so far deceived in him ?

SEC. LORD. Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge, without any malice, but to speak of him as my kinsman, he's a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of no 10 one good quality worthy your lordship's entertainment.

FIRST LORD. It were fit you knew him ; lest, reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath not, he might at some great and trusty business in a main danger fail you.

BER. I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

FIRST LORD. None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

SEC. LORD. I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprise him ; such I will have, whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy : we will bind and hood- 20 wink him so, that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries, when we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship present at his examination : if he do not, for the promise of his life and in the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgement in any thing.

FIRST LORD. O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum ; he says he has a stratagem for't : 30

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

when your lordship sees the bottom of his success in 't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

*Enter PAROLLES*

SEC. LORD. [*Aside to Ber.*] O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of his design: let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

BER. How now, monsieur! this drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

FIRST LORD. A pox on 't, let it go; 't is but a drum. 40

PAR. "But a drum"! is't "but a drum"? A drum so lost! There was excellent command, — to charge in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend our own soldiers!

FIRST LORD. That was not to be blamed in the command of the service: it was a disaster of war that Cæsar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

BER. Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success: some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to be recovered. 50

---

33 *give him John Drum's entertainment*] give him a good beating. The phrase is common. Cf. Edward Aston's translation of Boemus' *Manners and Customs of all Nations*, 1611: "some others on the contrarie part, give them *John Drum's intertainm<sup>t</sup>* reviling and beating them away from their houses."

37 *in any hand*] in any case, at any rate.

SCENE VI ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. It might have been recovered.

BER. It might ; but it is not now.

PAR. It is to be recovered : but that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have that drum or another, or "hic jacet."

BER. Why, if you have a stomach, to 't, monsieur : if you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprise and go on ; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit : if you speed well in 60 it, the Duke shall both speak of it, and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness.

PAR. By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BER. But you must not now slumber in it.

PAR. I 'll about it this evening : and I will presently pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself into my mortal preparation ; and by midnight look to hear further from me.

BER. May I be bold to acquaint his Grace you are 70 gone about it ?

PAR. I know not what the success will be, my lord ; but the attempt I vow.

BER. I know thou 'rt valiant ; and, to the possibility of thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAR. I love not many words. [Exit.

SEC. LORD. No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems

---

67 dilemmas] the various difficulties of the undertaking.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done ; damns himself to do, and dares better be damned 80 than to do 't ?

FIRST LORD. You do not know him, my lord, as we do : certain it is, that he will steal himself into a man's favour and for a week escape a great deal of discoveries ; but when you find him out, you have him ever after.

BER. Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of this that so seriously he does address himself unto ?

SEC. LORD. None in the world ; but return with an invention, and clap upon you two or three probable lies : but we have almost embossed him ; you shall see 90 his fall to-night ; for indeed he is not for your lordship's respect.

FIRST LORD. We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him. He was first smoked by the old lord Lafeu : when his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him ; which you shall see this very night.

SEC. LORD. I must go look my twigs : he shall be caught.

BER. Your brother he shall go along with me.

SEC. LORD. As 't please your lordship : I'll leave you. [Exit.

---

90 *embossed*] used of a hunted animal driven to extremities. Cf. Spenser, *Fairy Queen*, III, i, 21 : "The savage beast *embossed* in weary chase."

97 *I must go look my twigs*. Cf. III, v, 22, *supra* : "They are limed [*i. e.* ensnared] with *the twigs*."

SCENE VII ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

BER. Now will I lead you to the house, and show you  
The lass I spoke of. 100

FIRST LORD. But you say she's honest.

BER. That's all the fault: I spoke with her but once  
And found her wondrous cold; but I sent to her,  
By this same coxcomb that we have i' the wind,  
Tokens and letters which she did re-send;  
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature:  
Will you go see her?

FIRST LORD. With all my heart, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII—FLORENCE

*THE WIDOW'S HOUSE*

*Enter HELENA and Widow*

HEL. If you misdoubt me that I am not she,  
I know not how I shall assure you further,  
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

WID. Though my estate be fallen, I was well born,  
Nothing acquainted with these businesses;  
And would not put my reputation now  
In any staining act.

HEL. Nor would I wish you.  
First, give me trust, the count he is my husband,  
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken  
Is so from word to word; and then you cannot, 10

---

3 *But I . . . upon*] Unless I forfeit my present aim (which is to conceal my identity from Bertram).

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT III

---

By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,  
Err in bestowing it.

WID. I should believe you ;  
For you have show'd me that which well approves  
You're great in fortune.

HEL. Take this purse of gold,  
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,  
Which I will over-pay and pay again  
When I have found it. The count he woos your  
daughter,

Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,  
Resolved to carry her : let her in fine consent,  
As we'll direct her how 't is best to bear it. 20  
Now his important blood will nought deny  
That she'll demand : a ring the county wears,  
That downward hath succeeded in his house  
From son to son, some four or five descents  
Since the first father wore it : this ring he holds  
In most rich choice ; yet in his idle fire,  
To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,  
How'er repented after.

WID. Now I see  
The bottom of your purpose.

HEL. You see it lawful, then : it is no more, 30  
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,  
Desires this ring ; appoints him an encounter ;  
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,

---

21 *important blood*] importunate blood. Cf. *Lear*, IV, iv, 26, "*important tears*."



SCENE VII ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Herself most chastely absent : after this,  
To marry her, I 'll add three thousand crowns  
To what is past already.

WID. I have yielded :  
Instruct my daughter how she shall persevere,  
That time and place with this deceit so lawful  
May prove coherent. Every night he comes  
With musics of all sorts and songs composed 40  
To her unworthiness : it nothing steads us  
To chide him from our eaves ; for he persists  
As if his life lay on 't.

HEL. Why then to-night  
Let us essay our plot ; which, if it speed,  
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,  
And lawful meaning in a lawful act,  
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact :  
But let 's about it. [Exeunt.

---

\*7 *both . . . a sinful fact*] both parties are free from sin; and yet the deed is rendered sinful by the attendant deception and mystification.



ACT FOURTH—SCENE I

*WITHOUT THE FLORENTINE CAMP*

*Enter Second French Lord, with five or six other Soldiers in ambush*

SECOND LORD



WE CAN COME NO other way but by this hedge-corner. When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will: though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to understand him, unless some one among us whom we must produce for an interpreter.

FIRST SOLD. Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

SEC. LORD. Art not acquainted with him? knows he not thy voice?

FIRST SOLD. No, sir, I warrant you.

10

SEC. LORD. But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

FIRST SOLD. E'en such as you speak to me.

SEC. LORD. He must think us some band of strangers i' the adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages ; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another ; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose : choughs' language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho ! here he comes, to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

*Enter PAROLLES*

PAR. Ten o'clock : within these three hours 't will be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done ? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it : they begin to smoke me ; and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy ; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

SEC. LORD. This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.

PAR. What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose ? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in

---

11 *linsey-woolsey*] gibberish. Cf. l. 19, *infra* : "choughs' language, gabble enough."

29 *not daring*] putting no reliance in.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

exploit: yet slight ones will not carry it; they will say, "Came you off with so little?" and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth, and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into <sup>40</sup> these perils.

SEC. LORD. Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?

PAR. I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

SEC. LORD. We cannot afford you so.

PAR. Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.

SEC. LORD. 'T would not do.

PAR. Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripped.

SEC. LORD. Hardly serve.

PAR. Though I swore I leaped from the window of <sup>50</sup> the citadel —

SEC. LORD. How deep?

PAR. Thirty fathom.

SEC. LORD. Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

---

<sup>40</sup> *mule*] This is the old reading, for which *mule* was substituted by Hanmer. Cf. *Hen. V*, I, ii, 231–232: "our grave, Like Turkish *mute*, shall have a tongueless mouth." But "mule" is often used as a synonym for "dumbness," and may well stand. The general meaning seems to be that Parolles will have to give his tongue away to a chattering butterwoman, and get another that won't speak at all, if his tongue be likely to get him into more difficulties of the kind that he is now experiencing. No other precise reference to "Bajazet's mule" or to "Bajazet's mute" has been found.

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. I would I had any drum of the enemy's: I would swear I recovered it.

SEC. LORD. You shall hear one anon.

PAR. A drum now of the enemy's, — [*Alarum within.* 60

SEC. LORD. Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

ALL. Cargo, cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.

PAR. O, ransom, ransom! do not hide mine eyes.

[*They seize and blindfold him.*

FIRST SOLD. Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAR. I know you are the Muskos' regiment;  
And I shall lose my life for want of language:  
If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch,  
Italian, or French, let him speak to me; I'll  
Discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

FIRST SOLD. Boskos vauvado: I understand thee, 70  
and can speak thy tongue. Kerelybonto, sir, betake  
thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy  
bosom.

PAR. O!

FIRST SOLD. O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania  
dulche.

SEC. LORD. Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

FIRST SOLD. The general is content to spare thee yet;  
And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on  
To gather from thee: haply thou mayst inform  
Something to save thy life.

PAR. O, let me live! 80

And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,  
Their force, their purposes; nay, I'll speak that  
Which you will wonder at.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

FIRST SOLD. But wilt thou faithfully ?

PAR. If I do not, damn me.

FIRST SOLD. Acordo linta.

Come on ; thou art granted space.

*[Exit, with Parolles guarded. A short alarm within.]*

SEC. LORD. Go, tell the Count Rousillon, and my brother,

We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled

Till we do hear from them.

SEC. SOLD. Captain, I will.

SEC. LORD. A' will betray us all unto ourselves : 90

Inform on that.

SEC. SOLD. So I will, sir.

SEC. LORD. Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II — FLORENCE

*THE WIDOW'S HOUSE*

*Enter BERTRAM and DIANA*

BER. They told me that your name was Fontibell.

DIA. No, my good lord, Diana.

BER. Titled goddess ;

And worth it, with addition ! But, fair soul,

In your fine frame hath love no quality ?

If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,

You are no maiden, but a monument :

SCENE II ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

When you are dead, you should be such a one  
As you are now, for you are cold and stern ;  
And now you should be as your mother was  
When your sweet self was got.

10

DIA. She then was honest.

BER. So should you be.

DIA. No :

My mother did but duty ; such, my lord,  
As you owe to your wife.

BER. No more o' that ;  
I prithee, do not strive against my vows :  
I was compell'd to her ; but I love thee  
By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever  
Do thee all rights of service.

DIA. Ay, so you serve us  
Till we serve you ; but when you have our roses,  
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves,  
And mock us with our bareness.

BER. How have I sworn ! 20

DIA. 'T is not the many oaths that makes the truth,  
But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.  
What is not holy, that we swear not by,  
But take the High'st to witness : then, pray you, tell me,  
If I should swear by Jove's great attributes,  
I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths,  
When I did love you ill ? This has no holding,  
To swear by him whom I protest to love,

---

14 *my vows*] my vows to renounce my wife.

19 *barely*] in their bareness.

27-29 *When I did . . . work against him*] When I loved you to your

That I will work against him : therefore your oaths  
 Are words and poor conditions, but unseal'd, 30  
 At least in my opinion.

BER. Change it, change it ;  
 Be not so holy-cruel : love is holy ;  
 And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts  
 That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,  
 But give thyself unto my sick desires,  
 Who then recover : say thou art mine, and ever  
 My love as it begins shall so persever.

DIA. I see that men make rope's in such a scarre  
 That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

BER. I'll lend it thee, my dear ; but have no power 40  
 To give it from me.

DIA. Will you not, my lord ?

BER. It is an honour 'longing to our house,  
 Bequeathed down from many ancestors ;  
 Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world  
 In me to lose.

---

dishonour and injury. There is no sense, no consistency, in taking  
 an oath, in the name of him whom I protest to love, to do him  
 a wrong.

38-39 *I see that men . . . ourselves*] This is the difficult reading of the  
 First and Second Folios ; *ropes* is substituted for *rope's* in the  
 Third Folio. The general intention of the sentence is that men  
 prove so persuasive that women abandon their virtue without  
 demur. "Scarre" means "ravine," and there would seem to  
 be some reference to making a bridge or ladder of ropes over a  
 difficult pass, and so to making a dangerous situation alluringly  
 facile. Numerous emendations have been suggested, but none are  
 satisfactory.



SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

DIA. Mine honour's such a ring :  
My chastity's the jewel of our house,  
Bequeathed down from many ancestors ;  
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world  
In me to lose : thus your own proper wisdom  
Brings in the champion Honour on my part, 50  
Against your vain assault.

BER. Here, take my ring :  
My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine,  
And I'll be bid by thee.

DIA. When midnight comes, knock at my chamber-  
window :  
I'll order take my mother shall not hear.  
Now will I charge you in the band of truth,  
When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,  
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me :  
My reasons are most strong ; and you shall know them  
When back again this ring shall be deliver'd : 60  
And on your finger in the night I'll put  
Another ring, that what in time proceeds  
May token to the future our past deeds.  
Adieu, till then ; then, fail not. You have won  
A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

BER. A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.  
[Exit.]

DIA. For which live long to thank both heaven and  
me !  
You may so in the end.  
My mother told me just how he would woo,  
As if she sat in's heart ; she says all men 70

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

Have the like oaths : he had sworn to marry me  
When his wife's dead ; therefore I'll lie with him  
When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,  
Marry that will, I live and die a maid :  
Only in this disguise I think 't no sin  
To cozen him that would unjustly win. [Exit.

SCENE III—THE FLORENTINE CAMP

*Enter the two French Lords and some two or three Soldiers*

FIRST LORD. You have not given him his mother's letter ?

SEC. LORD. I have delivered it an hour since : there is something in 't that stings his nature ; for on the reading it he changed almost into another man.

FIRST LORD. He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady.

SEC. LORD. Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the king, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you. 10

---

73 *braid*] deceitful, tricky. The adjective is unknown elsewhere. A substantive "braid" is often found in the sense of trick. Cf. Greene's *Never too Late* (1592): "love's braids" (*i. e.* deceits). "Braidiness," *i. e.* deceitfulness, appears in Montgomerie, *Poems*, 1600.

1 *First Lord*] In the Folios the "First Lord" is called "Cap. G," and the Second Lord "Cap. E." See note II, i, 1-2, *supra*.

SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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FIRST LORD. When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

SEC. LORD. He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste renown ; and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour : he hath given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.

FIRST LORD. Now, God delay our rebellion ! as we are ourselves, what things are we !

SEC. LORD. Merely our own traitors. And as in the <sup>20</sup> common course of all treasons, we still see them reveal themselves, till they attain to their abhorred ends, so he that in this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself.

FIRST LORD. Is it not meant damnable in us, to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents ? We shall not then have his company to-night ?

SEC. LORD. Not till after midnight ; for he is dieted to his hour.

FIRST LORD. That approaches apace : I would gladly <sup>30</sup>

---

17 *composition*] compact.

18 *God delay our rebellion*] God retard or mitigate our tendency to rebel, or sin. Cf. *infra*, "Natural *rebellion* done i' the blaze of youth," V, iii, 6. "Delay" has often the sense of "allay."

22 *till they attain to their abhorred ends*] till they reach or reap their ignominious punishments.

23-24 *in his . . . o'erflows himself*] blabs his secrets in his own stream (of talk), "reveals himself."

28-29 *he is dieted to his hour*] he has food or work prescribed for him within the appointed hour. Diana has bidden him remain with her "but an hour," IV, ii, 57, *supra*.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

have him see his company anatomized, that he might take a measure of his own judgements, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit.

SEC. LORD. We will not meddle with him till he come; for his presence must be the whip of the other.

FIRST LORD. In the meantime, what hear you of these wars?

SEC. LORD. I hear there is an overture of peace.

FIRST LORD. Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

SEC. LORD. What will Count Rousillon do then? <sup>40</sup>  
will he travel higher, or return again into France?

FIRST LORD. I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether of his council.

SEC. LORD. Let it be forbid, sir; so should I be a great deal of his act.

FIRST LORD. Sir, his wife some two months since fled from his house: her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand; which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she accomplished; and, there residing, the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and <sup>so</sup>  
now she sings in heaven.

SEC. LORD. How is this justified?

FIRST LORD. The stronger part of it by her own letters, which makes her story true, even to the point of her death: her death itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place.

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<sup>33</sup> *counterfeit*] false coin, impostor.

<sup>41</sup> *higher*] further inland.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SEC. LORD. Hath the count all this intelligence ?

FIRST LORD. Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from point, to the full arming of the verity.

SEC. LORD. I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of 60 this.

FIRST LORD. How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses !

SEC. LORD. And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears ! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.

FIRST LORD. The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together : our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not ; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues. 70

*Enter a Messenger*

How now ! where's your master !

SERV. He met the Duke in the street, sir, of whom he hath taken a solemn leave : his lordship will next morning for France. The Duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the king.

SEC. LORD. They shall be no more than needful there, if they were more than they can commend.

FIRST LORD. They cannot be too sweet for the king's tartness. Here's his lordship now.

*Enter BERTRAM*

How now, my lord ! is't not after midnight ? 80

BER. I have to-night dispatched sixteen businesses, a

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

month's length a-piece, by an abstract of success : I have congied with the Duke, done my adieu with his nearest ; buried a wife, mourned for her ; writ to my lady mother I am returning ; entertained my convoy ; and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer needs : the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.

SEC. LORD. If the business be of any difficulty, and this morning your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

90

BER. I mean, the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it hereafter. But shall we have this dialogue between the fool and the soldier ? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module, has deceived me, like a double-meaning prophesier.

SEC. LORD. Bring him forth : has sat i' the stocks all night, poor gallant knave.

BER. No matter ; his heels have deserved it, in usurping his spurs so long. How does he carry himself ?

99

SEC. LORD. I have told your lordship already, the stocks carry him. But to answer you as you would be understood ; he weeps like a wench that had shed her

---

82 *by an abstract of success*] summarily, in rapid succession, without any pause.

85 *entertained my convoy*] engaged my guides, escort.

94 *module*] mould, model or copy, used contemptuously. Cf. *K. John*, V, vii, 57-58 : " a clod And *module* of confounded royalty."

95 *double-meaning*] Cf. *Macbeth*, V, viii, 20 : " That palter with us in a *double sense*."

98-99 *usurping . . . long*] A soldier convicted of cowardice was forcibly deprived of his spurs.

SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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milk: he hath confessed himself to Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time of his remembrance to this very instant disaster of his setting i' the stocks: and what think you he hath confessed?

BER. Nothing of me, has a'?

SEC. LORD. His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his face: if your lordship be in 't, as I believe you are, you must have the patience to hear it. 110

*Enter PAROLLES guarded, and First Soldier*

BER. A plague upon him! muffled! he can say nothing of me: hush, hush!

FIRST LORD. Hoodman comes! Portotartarossa.

FIRST SOLD. He calls for the tortures: what will you say without 'em?

PAR. I will confess what I know without constraint: if ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.

FIRST SOLD. Bosko chimurcho.

FIRST LORD. Boblibindo chicurmurco.

FIRST SOLD. You are a merciful general. Our general bids you answer to what I shall ask you out of a note. 121

PAR. And truly, as I hope to live.

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] First demand of him how many horse the Duke is strong. What say you to that?

PAR. Five or six thousand; but very weak and unserviceable: the troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit, and as I hope to live.

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113 *Hoodman comes!*] The cry of players at blind man's buff.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

FIRST SOLD. Shall I set down your answer so ?

PAR. Do: I'll take the sacrament on 't, how and which way you will. 131

BER. All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this !

FIRST LORD. You're deceived, my lord : this is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist, — that was his own phrase, — that had the whole theoretic of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the chape of his dagger.

SEC. LORD. I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword clean, nor believe he can have every thing in him by wearing his apparel neatly.

FIRST SOLD. Well, that's set down. 140

PAR. Five or six thousand horse, I said, — I will say true, — or thereabouts, set down, for I'll speak truth.

FIRST LORD. He's very near the truth in this.

BER. But I con him no thanks for 't, in the nature he delivers it.

PAR. Poor rogues, I pray you, say.

FIRST SOLD. Well, that's set down.

PAR. I humbly thank you, sir : a truth's a truth, the rogues are marvellous poor.

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] Demand of him, of what strength they are a-foot. What say you to that ? 151

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135-136 *the whole theoretic . . . dagger* "Theorique (*i. e.* theory) and practice of warre" is a phrase commonly met with, and is the title of a book translated from the Spanish by Sir Edward Hoby (1597). The "chape" of the dagger was correctly the metal point at the end of the scabbard, but here seems used for the scabbard itself.



SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty; Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred and fifty each; mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred and fifty each: so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake the snow from off their cassocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces. 160

BER. What shall be done to him?

FIRST LORD. Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my condition, and what credit I have with the Duke.

FIRST SOLD. Well, that's set down. [*Reads*] You shall demand of him, whether one Captain Dumain be i' the camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the Duke; what his valour, honesty, and expertness in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt. What say you to this? what do you know of it?

PAR. I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories: demand them singly. 171

FIRST SOLD. Do you know this Captain Dumain?

PAR. I know him: a' was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the shrieve's fool with child,—a dumb innocent, that could not say him nay.

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174 *shrieve's fool*] Here an idiot woman in charge of the sheriff, who was official guardian of all imbeciles.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

BER. Nay, by your leave, hold your hands ; though I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

FIRST SOLD. Well, is this captain in the Duke of Florence's camp ?

PAR. Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy. 180

FIRST LORD. Nay, look not so upon me ; we shall hear of your lordship anon.

FIRST SOLD. What is his reputation with the Duke ?

PAR. The Duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine ; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' the band : I think I have his letter in my pocket.

FIRST SOLD. Marry, we'll search.

PAR. In good sadness, I do not know ; either it is there, or it is upon a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent.

FIRST SOLD. Here 't is ; here 's a paper : shall I read it to you ? 191

PAR. I do not know if it be it or no.

BER. Our interpreter does it well.

FIRST LORD. Excellently.

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] Dian, the count 's a fool, and full of gold, —

PAR. That is not the Duke's letter, sir ; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurement of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish : I pray you, sir, put it up again. 200

FIRST SOLD. Nay, I'll read it first, by your favour.

---

177 *next tile that falls*] a figurative expression for "sudden death."

188 *in good sadness*] in all seriousness.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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PAR. My meaning in 't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid ; for I knew the young count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds.

BER. Damnable both-sides rogue !

FIRST SOLD. [*reads*] When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it ;

After he scores, he never pays the score :  
Half won is match well made ; match, and well make it ;  
He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before ; 210  
And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this,  
Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss :  
For count of this, the count 's a fool, I know it,  
Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.

Thine, as he vowed to thee in thine ear,

PAROLLES.

BER. He shall be whipped through the army with this rhyme in 's forehead.

SEC. LORD. This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold linguist and the armipotent soldier. 220

PAR. I could endure any thing before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me.

FIRST SOLD. I perceive, sir, by the general's looks, we shall be fain to hang you.

PAR. My life, sir, in any case : not that I am afraid to die ; but that, my offences being many, I would repent out the remainder of nature : let me live, sir, in a dungeon, i' the stocks, or any where, so I may live.

FIRST SOLD. We 'll see what may be done, so you confess freely ; therefore, once more to this Captain

Dumain: you have answered to his reputation with the Duke and to his valour: what is his honesty? 232

PAR. He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister: for rapes and ravishments he parallels Nessus: he professes not keeping of oaths; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules: he will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool: drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bed-clothes about him; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty: he has every thing that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should have, he has nothing. 243

FIRST LORD. I begin to love him for this.

BER. For this description of thine honesty? A pox upon him for me, he's more and more a cat.

FIRST SOLD. What say you to his expertness in war?

PAR. Faith, sir, has led the drum before the English tragedians; to belie him, I will not, and more of his soldiership I know not; except, in that country he had the honour to be the officer at a place there called Mile-end, to instruct for the doubling of files: I would do the man what honour I can, but of this I am not certain. 253

FIRST LORD. He hath out-villained villany so far, that the rarity redeems him.

233 *steal, sir, an egg . . . cloister*] steal anything, however trifling, from any place however holy. It is possible that "egg" is used here for a young girl. The term is applied to a child in *Macbeth*, IV, ii, 82.

251-252 *Mile-end*] The drilling ground of the London train bands.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

BER. A pox on him, he's a cat still.

FIRST SOLD. His qualities being at this poor price, I need not to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

PAR. Sir, for a quart d'écu he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually. 261

FIRST SOLD. What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

SEC. LORD. Why does he ask him of me?

FIRST SOLD. What's he?

PAR. E'en a crow o' the same nest; not altogether so great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil: he excels his brother for a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best that is: in a retreat he outruns any lackey; marry, in coming on he has the cramp. 270

FIRST SOLD. If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray the Florentine?

PAR. Ay, and the captain of his horse, Count Rousillon.

FIRST SOLD. I'll whisper with the general, and know his pleasure.

PAR. [*Aside*] I'll no more drumming; a plague of all drums! Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the count,

---

260-261 *cut the entail . . . perpetually*] give absolute possession in perpetuity, by freeing the estate of all other claims.  
269 *lackey*] running footman.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

have I run into this danger. Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken? 280

FIRST SOLD. There is no remedy, sir, but you must die: the general says, you that have so traitorously discovered the secrets of your army and made such pestiferous reports of men very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use; therefore you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

PAR. O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death!

FIRST SOLD. That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends. [Unblinding him.]

So, look about you: know you any here? 290

BER. Good morrow, noble captain.

SEC. LORD. God bless you, Captain Parolles.

FIRST LORD. God save you, noble captain.

SEC. LORD. Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu? I am for France.

FIRST LORD. Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon? an I were not a very coward, I 'ld compel it of you: but fare you well. [Exeunt Bertram and Lords.]

FIRST SOLD. You are undone, captain, all but your scarf; that has a knot on 't yet. 301

PAR. Who cannot be crushed with a plot?

FIRST SOLD. If you could find out a country where but women were that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fair ye well, sir; I am for France too: we shall speak of you there.

[Exit, with Soldiers.]

SCENE IV ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

PAR. Yet am I thankful : if my heart were great,  
'T would burst at this. Captain I'll be no more ;  
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft  
As captain shall : simply the thing I am 310  
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,  
Let him fear this, for it will come to pass  
That every braggart shall be found an ass.  
Rust, sword ! cool, blushes ! and, Parolles, live  
Safest in shame ! being fool'd, by foolery thrive !  
There's place and means for every man alive.  
I'll after them. [Exit.

SCENE IV — FLORENCE

*THE WIDOW'S HOUSE*

*Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA*

HEL. That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd  
you,  
One of the greatest in the Christian world  
Shall be my surety ; 'fore whose throne 't is needful,  
Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel :  
Time was, I did him a desired office,  
Dear almost as his life ; which gratitude  
Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,  
And answer, thanks : I duly am inform'd  
His Grace is at Marseilles ; to which place

---

9 *Marseilles*] pronounced as a trisyllable. *Marsellis* is the reading of the Second and Third Folios.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

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We have convenient convoy. You must know, 10  
I am supposed dead : the army breaking,  
My husband hies him home ; where, heaven aiding,  
And by the leave of my good lord the king,  
We 'll be before our welcome.

WID. Gentle madam,  
You never had a servant to whose trust  
Your business was more welcome.

HEL. Nor you, mistress,  
Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour  
To recompense your love : doubt not but heaven  
Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,  
As it hath fated her to be my motive 20  
And helper to a husband. But, O strange men !  
That can such sweet use make of what they hate,  
When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts  
Defiles the pitchy night : so lust doth play  
With what it loathes for that which is away.  
But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,  
Under my poor instructions yet must suffer  
Something in my behalf.

DIA. Let death and honesty  
Go with your impositions, I am yours  
Upon your will to suffer.

HEL. Yet, I pray you : 30

---

11 *breaking*] disbanding.

19-20 *dower . . . motive*] Both words are here used, in conformity with  
a common Elizabethan usage, in a personal significance, *viz.* : giver  
of dower, and supplier of motion, *i. e.* the mover or instrument.

30 *Yet*] For a while. Cf. 27, *supra*, "*yet* must suffer."



SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

But with the word the time will bring on summer,  
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,  
And be as sweet as sharp. We must away ;  
Our waggon is prepared, and time revives us :  
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL : still the fine 's the  
crown ;  
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown. [ *Exeunt.*

SCENE V — ROUSILLON

*THE COUNT'S PALACE*

*Enter* COUNTESS, LAFEU, and Clown

LAF. No, no, no, your son was misled with a sniptaffeta fellow there, whose villanous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughy youth of a nation in his colour : your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more advanced by the king than by that red-tailed humble-bee I speak of.

COUNT. I would I had not known him ; it was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature

---

31 *with the word*] immediately ; as soon as the word is spoken, or promise given.

35 *All's well that ends well, etc.*] A common proverb. "The fine 's the crown" translates the Latin proverb "finis coronat opus."

2 *saffron*] Saffron was commonly used in the colouring of pastry. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iii, 44 : "I must have *saffron* to colour the warden pies." Saffron was also a popular dye for both men and women's dress. Reference is here made to both uses of the colouring matter, of which the tinge easily infects its environment.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother, I could not have owed her a more rooted love. 11

LAF. 'T was a good lady, 't was a good lady : we may pick a thousand salads ere we light on such another herb.

CLO. Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace.

LAF. They are not herbs, you knave ; they are nose-herbs.

CLO. I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir ; I have not much skill in grass.

LAF. Whether dost thou profess thyself, a knave or 20 a fool ?

CLO. A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

LAF. Your distinction ?

CLO. I would cozen the man of his wife and do his service.

LAF. So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

CLO. And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

LAF. I will subscribe for thee, thou art both knave and fool.

CLO. At your service. 30

LAF. No, no, no.

CLO. Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are.

15 *herb of grace*] rue.

16 *nose-herbs*] herbs to be smelled, not eaten.

28 *I will subscribe for thee*] I'll warrant thee.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

LAF. Who 's that ? a Frenchman ?

CLO. Faith, sir, a' has an English name ; but his fis-  
nomy is more hotter in France than there.

LAF. What prince is that ?

CLO. The black prince, sir ; alias, the prince of dark-  
ness ; alias, the devil.

LAF. Hold thee, there 's my purse : I give thee not <sup>40</sup>  
this to suggest thee from thy master thou talkest of ;  
serve him still.

CLO. I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a  
great fire ; and the master I speak of ever keeps a good  
fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the world ; let his  
nobility remain in 's court. I am for the house with the  
narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to  
enter : some that humble themselves may ; but the many  
will be too chill and tender, and they 'll be for the flowery  
way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

LAF. Go thy ways, I begin to be weary of thee ; and <sup>50</sup>  
I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with  
thee. Go thy ways : let my horses be well looked to,  
without any tricks.

CLO. If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be  
jades' tricks ; which are their own right by the law of  
nature. [Exit.

LAF. A shrewd knave and an unhappy.

COUNT. So he is. My lord that 's gone made himself

---

<sup>35</sup> *name*] Rowe's satisfactory emendation of the First Folio *maine*.

<sup>56</sup> *A shrewd knave and an unhappy*] A roguish knave, and one that  
causes ill-hap or bad luck.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT IV

---

much sport out of him : by his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness ; and, indeed, he has no *pace*, but runs where he will. 60

LAF. I like him well ; 't is not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the king my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter ; which, in the minority of them both, his majesty, out of a self-gracious remembrance, did first propose : his highness hath promised me to do it : and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it ?

COUNT. With very much content, my lord ; and I wish it happily effected. 70

LAF. His highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he numbered thirty : he will be here to-morrow, or I am deceived by him that in such intelligence hath seldom failed.

COUNT. It rejoices me, that I hope I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here to-night : I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me till they meet together.

LAF. Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be admitted. 80

COUNT. You need but plead your honourable privilege.

LAF. Lady, of that I have made a bold charter ; but I thank my God it holds yet.

---

60 *he has no pace*] he has no prescribed rule of conduct.

SCENE V ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

*Re-enter Clown*

CLO. O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet on's face: whether there be a scar under't or no, the velvet knows; but 't is a goodly patch of velvet: his left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

LAF. A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good 90 livery of honour; so belike is that.

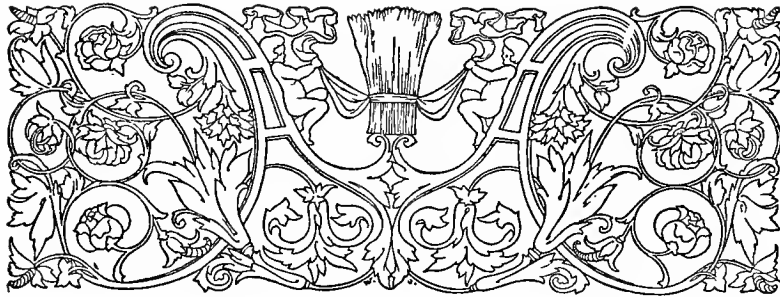
CLO. But it is your carbonadoed face.

LAF. Let us go see your son, I pray you: I long to talk with the young noble soldier.

CLO. Faith, there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine hats and most courteous feathers, which bow the head and nod at every man. [*Exeunt.*

---

88-89 *two pile and a half*] a reference to the quality of the velvet of which the patch was made. Three piled velvet was the best quality. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, I, ii, 32: "Thou art good velvet; thou'rt a *three piled* piece."



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — MARSEILLES

A STREET

*Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA, with two Attendants*

HELENA



UT THIS EXCEEDING  
posting day and night.  
Must wear your spirits low ; we  
cannot help it :  
But since you have made the  
days and nights as one,  
To wear your gentle limbs in my  
affairs,  
Be bold you do so grow in my  
requital  
As nothing can unroot you. In  
happy time ;

*Enter a Gentleman*

This man may help me to his majesty's ear,  
If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

5, 6 *Be bold . . . unroot you*] Be assured that the claims on my recognition are growing so great that nothing can cancel them.

6 *Enter a Gentleman*] This is Rowe's emendation of the First Folio

SCENE I ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

GENT. And you.

HEL. Sir, I have seen you in the court of France. 10

GENT. I have been sometimes there.

HEL. I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen  
From the report that goes upon your goodness ;  
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,  
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to  
The use of your own virtues, for the which  
I shall continue thankful.

GENT. What's your will ?

HEL. That it will please you  
To give this poor petition to the king,  
And aid me with that store of power you have 20  
To come into his presence.

GENT. The king's not here.

HEL. Not here, sir !

GENT. Not, indeed :  
He hence removed last night and with more haste  
Than is his use.

WID. Lord, how we lose our pains !

HEL. ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL yet,  
Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.  
I do beseech you, whither is he gone ?

GENT. Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon ;  
Whither I am going.

HEL. I do beseech you, sir,

---

reading, *Enter a gentle Astringer (i. e. falconer)*, a reading which  
the text fails to justify.

14 *goaded . . . occasions*] incited by most pressing needs.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

---

Since you are like to see the king before me, 30  
Commend the paper to his gracious hand,  
Which I presume shall render you no blame  
But rather make you thank your pains for it.  
I will come after you with what good speed  
Our means will make us means.

GENT. This I'll do for you.

HEL. And you shall find yourself to be well  
thank'd,

Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again.  
Go, go, provide. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II — ROUSILLON

BEFORE THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Enter Clown, and PAROLLES, following*

PAR. Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu  
this letter : I have ere now, sir, been better known to  
you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes ;  
but I am now, sir, muddied in fortune's mood, and smell  
somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

CLO. Truly, fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it  
smell so strongly as thou speakest of : I will henceforth  
eat no fish of fortune's buttering. Prithee, allow the  
wind.

PAR. Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir ; I  
spake but by a metaphor. 10

CLO. Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop



SCENE II ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

my nose ; or against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get thee further.

PAR. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

CLO. Foh ! prithee, stand away : a paper from fortune's close-stool to give to a nobleman ! Look, here he comes himself.

*Enter LAFEU*

Here is a purr of fortune's, sir, or of fortune's cat, — but not a musk-cat, — that has fallen into the unclean fish-pond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied<sup>20</sup> withal : pray you, sir, use the carp as you may ; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my similes of comfort and leave him to your lordship. [*Exit.*]

PAR. My lord, I am a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched.

LAF. And what would you have me to do ? 'Tis too late to pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with fortune, that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady and would not have knaves<sup>30</sup> thrive long under her ? There's a quart d'écu for you : let the justices make you and fortune friends : I am for other business.

---

18 *purr of fortune's . . . cat*] Parolles' speech is contemptuously compared to the murmuring of a cat.

23 *similes*] Theobald's emendation of the First Folio reading *smiles*. "Unsavoury *similes*" is misprinted "unsavoury *smiles*" in the older editions in *1 Hen. IV*, I, ii, 77.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

---

PAR. I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

LAF. You beg a single penny more : come, you shall ha't ; save your word.

PAR. My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

LAF. You beg more than " word," then. Cox my passion ! give me your hand. How does your drum ? 40

PAR. O my good lord, you were the first that found me !

LAF. Was I, in sooth ? and I was the first that lost thee.

PAR. It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out.

LAF. Out upon thee, knave ! dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil ? One brings thee in grace and the other brings thee 48 out. [*Trumpets sound.*] The king's coming ; I know by his trumpets. Sirrah, inquire further after me ; I had talk of you last night : though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat ; go to, follow.

PAR. I praise God for you. [*Exeunt.*]

---

39 *more than " word "*] an obvious quibble on the fact that " Parolles " (*i. e.* *paroles*) is the plural of the French *parole* (*i. e.* *word*).

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

SCENE III — ROUSILLON

THE COUNT'S PALACE

*Flourish.* Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, the two French Lords,  
with Attendants

KING. We lost a jewel of her ; and our esteem  
Was made much poorer by it : but your son,  
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know  
Her estimation home.

COUNT. 'T is past, my liege ;  
And I beseech your majesty to make it  
Natural rebellion, done i' the blaze of youth ;  
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,  
O'erbears it and burns on.

KING. My honour'd lady,  
I have forgiven and forgotten all ;  
Though my revenges were high bent upon him, 10  
And watch'd the time to shoot.

LAF. This I must say,  
But first I beg my pardon, the young lord  
Did to his majesty, his mother and his lady  
Offence of mighty note ; but to himself  
The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife

---

1 *our esteem*] the esteem in which we held the world at large, or  
things in general.

3-4 *kno.v . . . home*] thoroughly appreciate her worth.

6 *blaze*] Theobald's emendation of the reading of the Folios, *blade*.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

---

Whose beauty did astonish the survey  
Of richest eyes, whose words all ears took captive,  
Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve  
Humbly call'd mistress.

KING. Praising what is lost  
Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither ; 20  
We are reconciled, and the first view shall kill  
All repetition : let him not ask our pardon ;  
The nature of his great offence is dead,  
And deeper than oblivion we do bury  
The incensing relics of it : let him approach,  
A stranger, no offender ; and inform him  
So 't is our will he should.

GENT. I shall, my liege. [*Exit.*]

KING. What says he to your daughter? have you  
spoke?

LAF. All that he is hath reference to your highness.

KING. Then shall we have a match. I have letters  
sent me 30  
That set him high in fame.

*Enter* BERTRAM

LAF. He looks well on 't.

KING. I am not a day of season,

---

17 *richest eyes*] eyes that have seen most beauty. Cf. *As You Like It*,  
IV, i, 21-22: "To have seen much . . . is to have *rich eyes*."

25 *incensing relics*] surviving details capable of incensing us.

29 *All . . . highness*] He refers himself entirely, wholly submits to  
your highness.

32 *a day of season*] a seasonable day, in which the weather is all of  
the same character.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail  
In me at once : but to the brightest beams  
Distracted clouds give way ; so stand thou forth ;  
The time is fair again.

BER. My high-repented blames,  
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

KING. All is whole ;  
Not one word more of the consumed time.  
Let 's take the instant by the forward top ;  
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees 40  
The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time  
Steals ere we can effect them. You remember  
The daughter of this lord ?

BER. Admiringly, my liege, at first  
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart  
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue :  
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,  
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,  
Which warp'd the line of every other favour ;  
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stolen ; 50  
Extended or contracted all proportions  
To a most hideous object : thence it came  
That she whom all men praised and whom myself,  
Since I have lost, have loved, was in mine eye  
The dust that did offend it.

KING. Well excused :

---

48 *perspective*] a glass or sort of telescope that distorts the object to which it is directed. Cf. *Rich. II*, II, ii, 18-19: "Like *perspectives*, which, rightly gazed upon, Show nothing but confusion."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away  
 From the great compt : but love that comes too late,  
 Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,  
 To the great sender turns a sour offence,  
 Crying "That 's good that 's gone." Our rash faults 60  
 Make trivial price of serious things we have,  
 Not knowing them until we know their grave :  
 Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,  
 Destroy our friends and after weep their dust :  
 Our own love waking cries to see what 's done,  
 While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.  
 Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.  
 Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin :  
 The main consents are had ; and here we'll stay  
 To see our widower's second marriage-day. 70

COUNT. Which better than the first, O dear heaven,  
 bless !

Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse !

LAF. Come on, my son, in whom my house's name  
 Must be digested, give a favour from you  
 To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,  
 That she may quickly come. [Bertram gives a ring.] By  
 my old beard,  
 And every hair that 's on 't, Helen, that 's dead,

66 *While . . . afternoon*] On the other hand, downright shameful hate  
 (incapable of love's remorse) goes on enjoying its habitual afternoon  
 slumbers unconcerned by any havoc that it may have worked.

72 *cesse*] the old spelling of "cease," retained here for the sake of  
 the rhyme.

74 *digested*] incorporated.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Was a sweet creature : such a ring as this,  
The last that e'er I took her leave at court,  
I saw upon her finger.

BER. Hers it was not. 80

KING. Now, pray you, let me see it ; for mine eye,  
While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to 't.  
This ring was mine ; and, when I gave it Helen,  
I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood  
Necessitied to help, that by this token  
I would relieve her. Had you that craft, to reave her  
Of what should stead her most ?

BER. My gracious sovereign,  
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,  
The ring was never hers.

COUNT. Son, on my life,  
I have seen her wear it ; and she reckon'd it 90  
At her life's rate.

LAF. I am sure I saw her wear it.

BER. You are deceived, my lord ; she never saw it :  
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,  
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name  
Of her that threw it : noble she was, and thought  
I stood engaged : but when I had subscribed  
To mine own fortune and inform'd her fully  
I could not answer in that course of honour  
As she had made the overture, she ceased

---

79 *The last*] The last time.

96-97 *I stood engaged . . . fortune*] I stood engaged to her ; but when  
I had formally given my consent to what my fortune required.

In heavy satisfaction and would never 100  
 Receive the ring again.

KING. Plutus himself,  
 That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,  
 Hath not in nature's mystery more science  
 Than I have in this ring: 't was mine, 't was Helen's,  
 Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know  
 That you are well acquainted with yourself,  
 Confess 't was hers, and by what rough enforcement  
 You got it from her: she call'd the saints to surety  
 That she would never put it from her finger,  
 Unless she gave it to yourself in bed, 110  
 Where you have never come, or sent it us  
 Upon her great disaster.

BER. She never saw it.

KING. Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;  
 And makest conjectural fears to come into me,  
 Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove  
 That thou art so inhuman, — 't will not prove so; —  
 And yet I know not: thou didst hate her deadly,  
 And she is dead; which nothing, but to close  
 Her eyes myself, could win me to believe,  
 More than to see this ring. Take him away. 120

[*Guards seize Bertram.*]

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,

100 *In heavy satisfaction*] Sorrowfully admitting that she was satisfied  
 (of my obligation elsewhere).

102 *tinct and multiplying medicine*] the alchemical tincture or elixir  
 which multiplies gold by transmuting into it other metals.

121-123 *My fore-past proofs . . . little*] However the matter turn



SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Shall tax my fears of little vanity,  
Having vainly fear'd too little. Away with him!  
We'll sift this matter further.

BER. If you shall prove  
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy  
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,  
Where yet she never was. [*Exit, guarded.*]

KING. I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.

*Enter a Gentleman*

GENT. Gracious sovereign,  
Whether I have been to blame or no, I know not:  
Here 's a petition from a Florentine, 130  
Who hath for four or five removes come short  
To tender it herself. I undertook it,  
Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech  
Of the poor suppliant, who by this I know  
Is here attending: her business looks in her  
With an importing visage; and she told me,  
In a sweet verbal brief, it did concern  
Your highness with herself. 135

KING. [*reads*] Upon his many protestations to marry me when  
his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. Now is the Count  
Rousillon a widower: his vows are forfeited to me, and my  
honour's paid to him. He stole from Florence, taking no leave,

---

out, the proofs I have already got together are sufficient to  
relieve my fears of any suspicion of their being vain or groundless.  
Hitherto I have ineptly been too little suspicious.  
137 *a sweet verbal brief*] Cf. II, iii, 178, *supra*, "the now-born brief."

ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

---

and I follow him to his country for justice : grant it me, O king !  
in you it best lies ; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and a poor maid  
is undone. DIANA CAPILET.

LAF. I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll  
for this : I'll none of him.

KING. The heavens have thought well on thee, Lafeu,  
To bring forth this discovery. Seek these suitors :  
Go speedily and bring again the count. 150  
I am afeard the life of Helen, lady,  
Was foully snatch'd.

COUNT. Now, justice on the doers !

*Re-enter BERTRAM, guarded*

KING. I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to  
you,  
And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,  
Yet you desire to marry.

*Enter Widow and DIANA*

What woman 's that ?

DIA. I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,  
Derived from the ancient Capilet :  
My suit, as I do understand, you know,  
And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

WID. I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour 160

---

146 *toll*] pay toll for him, like the purchaser of a horse at a fair ; come  
honestly by him.

154 *swear them lordship*] swear (in the marriage service) to become  
their lords.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

---

Both suffer under this complaint we bring,  
And both shall cease, without your remedy.

KING. Come hither, count; do you know these  
women?

BER. My lord, I neither can nor will deny  
But that I know them: do they charge me further?

DIA. Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

BER. She's none of mine, my lord.

DIA. If you shall marry,  
You give away this hand, and that is mine;  
You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;  
You give away myself, which is known mine; 170  
For I by vow am so embodied yours,  
That she which marries you must marry me,  
Either both or none.

LAF. Your reputation comes too short for my daughter;  
you are no husband for her.

BER. My lord, this is a fond and desperate creature,  
Whom sometime I have laugh'd with: let your highness  
Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour  
Than for to think that I would sink it here.

KING. Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend  
Till your deeds gain them: fairer prove your honour 181  
Than in my thought it lies.

DIA. Good my lord,  
Ask him upon his oath, if he does think  
He had not my virginity.

KING. What say'st thou to her?

---

162 *both . . . remedy*] both shall perish, unless you give the remedy.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

---

BER. She 's impudent, my lord,  
And was a common gamester to the camp.

DIA. He does me wrong, my lord ; if I were so,  
He might have bought me at a common price :  
Do not believe him. O, behold this ring,  
Whose high respect and rich validity 190  
Did lack a parallel ; yet for all that  
He gave it to a commoner o' the camp,  
If I be one.

COUNT. He blushes, and 't is it :  
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem,  
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,  
Hath it been owed and worn. This is his wife ;  
That ring 's a thousand proofs.

KING. Methought you said  
You saw one here in court could witness it.

DIA. I did, my lord, but loath am to produce  
So bad an instrument : his name 's Parolles. 200

LAF. I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

KING. Find him, and bring him hither.

*[Exit an Attendant.]*

BER. What of him ?  
He 's quoted for a most perfidious slave,  
With all the spots o' the world tax'd and debosh'd ;  
Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.  
Am I or that or this for what he 'll utter,  
That will speak any thing?

KING. She hath that ring of yours.

BER. I think she has : certain it is I liked her,  
And boarded her i' the wanton way of youth :

SCENE III ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

She knew her distance, and did angle for me, 210  
 Madding my eagerness with her restraint,  
 As all impediments in fancy's course  
 Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,  
 Her infinite cunning, with her modern grace,  
 Subdued me to her rate: she got the ring;  
 And I had that which any inferior might  
 At market-price have bought.

DIA. I must be patient:  
 You, that have turn'd off a first so noble wife,  
 May justly diet me. I pray you yet,  
 Since you lack virtue I will lose a husband, 220  
 Send for your ring, I will return it home,  
 And give me mine again.

BER. I have it not.

KING. What ring was yours, I pray you?

DIA. Sir, much like  
 The same upon your finger.

KING. Know you this ring? this ring was his of late.

212-213 *As all impediments . . . fancy*] As all obstructions in the way of love only incite its increase.

214 *Her infinite cunning*] The First Folio reading is *Her insuite coming*, of which no sense has been made. The felicitous emendation in the text is due to Sidney Walker. "Modern grace" may be "modish grace." But the conjectural reading, *modest grace*, deserves attention.

215 *Subdued me to her rate*] Brought me to accept her terms.

219 *diet me*] Perhaps this may mean "prescribe for me a regimen or course of living." Cf. note on IV, iii, 28, *supra*. The reading is generally held to be corrupt. The meaning required seems to be something like "feed on me."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

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DIA. And this was it I gave him, being abed.

KING. The story then goes false, you threw it him  
Out of a casement.

DIA. I have spoke the truth.

*Enter PAROLLES*

BER. My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

KING. You boggle shrewdly, every feather starts you.  
Is this the man you speak of?

DIA. Ay, my lord. 231

KING. Tell me, sirrah, but tell me true, I charge you,  
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,  
Which on your just proceeding I'll keep off,  
By him and by this woman here what know you?

PAR. So please your majesty, my master hath been  
an honourable gentleman: tricks he hath had in him,  
which gentlemen have.

KING. Come, come, to the purpose: did he love this  
woman? 240

PAR. Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

KING. How, I pray you?

PAR. He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a  
woman.

KING. How is that?

PAR. He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

KING. As thou art a knave, and no knave. What an  
equivocal companion is this!

PAR. I am a poor man, and at your majesty's command.

LAF. He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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DIA. Do you know he promised me marriage ? 250

PAR. Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

KING. But wilt thou not speak all thou knowest ?

PAR. Yes, so please your majesty. I did go between them, as I said ; but more than that, he loved her : for indeed he was mad for her, and talked of Satan, and of Limbo, and of Furies, and I know not what : yet I was in that credit with them at that time, that I knew of their going to bed, and of other motions, as promising her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak of ; therefore I will not speak what I know. 260

KING. Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are married : but thou art too fine in thy evidence ; therefore stand aside.

This ring, you say, was yours ?

DIA. Ay, my good lord.

KING. Where did you buy it ? or who gave it you ?

DIA. It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

KING. Who lent it you ?

DIA. It was not lent me neither.

KING. Where did you find it, then ?

DIA. I found it not.

KING. If it were yours by none of all these ways,  
How could you give it him ?

DIA. I never gave it him. 270

LAF. This woman's an easy glove, my lord ; she goes off and on at pleasure.

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259 *derive me ill will*] get me, bring down on me, ill will.

262 *too fine*] too subtle, artful.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

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KING. This ring was mine ; I gave it his first wife.

DIA. It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

KING. Take her away ; I do not like her now ;  
To prison with her : and away with him.

Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring,  
Thou diest within this hour.

DIA. I'll never tell you.

KING. Take her away.

DIA. I'll put in bail, my liege.

KING. I think thee now some common customer. 280

DIA. By Jove, if ever I knew man, 't was you.

KING. Wherefore hast thou accused him all this  
while?

DIA. Because he 's guilty, and he is not guilty :  
He knows I am no maid, and he 'll swear to 't ;  
I 'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.  
Great king, I am no strumpet, by my life ;  
I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

KING. She does abuse our ears : to prison with her.

DIA. Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir :

[*Exit Widow.*]

The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for, 290  
And he shall surety me. But for this lord,  
Who hath abused me, as he knows himself,  
Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him :  
He knows himself my bed he hath defiled ;  
And at that time he got his wife with child :  
Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick :  
So there 's my riddle, — One that 's dead is quick :  
And now behold the meaning.



SCENE III ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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*Re-enter* Widow, *with* HELENA

KING. Is there no exorcist  
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes ?  
Is 't real that I see ?

HEL. No, my good lord ; 300  
'T is but the shadow of a wife you see,  
The name and not the thing.

BER. Both, both. O, pardon !

HEL. O my good lord, when I was like this maid,  
I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring ;  
And, look you, here 's your letter ; this it says :  
"When from my finger you can get this ring  
And are by me with child," &c. This is done :  
Will you be mine, now you are doubly won ?

BER. If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,  
I 'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly. 310

HEL. If it appear not plain and prove untrue,  
Deadly divorce step between me and you !  
O my dear mother, do I see you living ?

LAF. Mine eyes smell onions ; I shall weep anon :  
[*To Parolles*] Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher :  
so, I thank thee : wait on me home, I 'll make sport with  
thee : let thy courtesies alone, they are scurvy ones.

KING. Let us from point to point this story know,  
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

[*To Diana*] If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower, 320

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298 *exorcist*] one who raises spirits. Cf. *Jul. Caes.* II, i, 323, 324 :  
"Thou like an *exorcist*, hast conjured up My mortified spirit."

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ACT V

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Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower ;  
For I can guess that by thy honest aid  
Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.  
Of that and all the progress, more and less,  
Resolvedly more leisure shall express :  
All yet seems well ; and if it end so meet,  
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet. [*Flourish.*]

EPILOGUE

KING. The king's a beggar, now the play is done :  
All is well ended, if this suit be won,  
That you express content ; which we will pay,  
With strife to please you, day exceeding day :  
Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts ;  
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts. [*Exeunt.*]

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5 parts] abilities.





















